

An exploratory study of women's experiences regarding the
interplay between domestic violence and abuse and sports events.

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the
University of Chester for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by
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Declaration by Candidate

The material being presented for examination is my own work and has not been submitted for an award of this or another HEI except in minor particulars which are explicitly noted in the body of the thesis. Where research pertaining to this thesis was undertaken collaboratively, the nature and extent of my individual contribution has been made explicit.

Signed.....

Dated.....

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Abstract

An exploratory study of women's experiences regarding the interplay between domestic violence and abuse and sporting events.

Jodie Swallow

Abstract

This qualitative study aimed to examine and critically explore women's accounts as to how their abusive partner's interest in sport (team combat sports in particular) impacted on the domestic violence and abuse they endured.

The study was underpinned by feminist standpoint epistemology and Lacanian theory. Values aligning with feminist standpoint epistemology, such as the nature and balance of power, were central to this research which had at its core the voices of marginalised women. At the stages of analysis and discussion the Lacanian model of the Real, the Symbolic and the Imaginary were used to explore the women's accounts. This model has afforded new insights into this culturally sensitive topic by removing the focus from the women who sustained abuse to the nature of the abuse they endured.

Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with nine women who were accessing women's support services. The women spoke of the abuse they had endured during the course of a heterosexual, intimate relationship. Thematic analysis provided new perspectives regarding the interplay between sport fanaticism and domestic violence and abuse.

This thesis extends existing research which has sought to interrogate the association between domestic violence and sporting events (mainly team combat sports). The significance of this study is that it confers deeper, richer understandings regarding the nature of domestic violence and abuse. It reveals how the perpetrators of abuse use violence and/or coercive and controlling behaviours around their sporting interests as a means of asserting power and subjugating their partners. The study is important in that it discloses how the perpetrators perceived some sports, especially football, as preserve which promoted male supremacy. It suggests avenues for further research and reflects upon the cultural significance of sport and team combat sport in particular. The study concludes by suggesting two key points which emerge from this study which underscore the pernicious, chronic and shifting nature of DVA and highlight the need for vigilance in responding to the cultural resources liable to be exploited by perpetrators of abuse.

Glossary of Terms

CPS Crown Prosecution Service

DA Domestic Abuse

DD Dynamo Deb

DV Domestic Violence

DVA Domestic Violence and Abuse

EU European Union

FIFA Fédération Internationale de Football Association: English - International

Federation of Association Football

FSE Feminist Standpoint Epistemology

IPV Intimate Partner Violence

NFL National Football League

RSI The Real, The Symbolic and The Imaginary

UEFA Union of European Football Association

Chapter One: Introduction to the Thesis

1.1 Structure of the chapter

This chapter opens by providing a broad outline of the literature which has formed the backdrop to this research project. It goes on to identify the research aims before presenting the plan for this study and introducing the theoretical frameworks which have informed this work. The chapter incorporates an explanation of my personal location which includes the pathway which led me to an interest in this area of research. A wide debate surrounds the terminology which might be used to describe domestic violence and abuse (DVA) and this chapter provides clarification regarding the terms I have employed and the conventions I have adopted. The chapter concludes by offering a summary of the structure of this thesis.

1.2 Background to the thesis

In this section I offer an overview of DVA, before presenting a brief examination of what the current literature tells us about any association between sport (team combat sport in particular) and DVA. In this way, the section reveals the lacuna in existing research which this study has sought to explore.

DVA is not a modern phenomenon and there are references to abuse spanning over the centuries back to biblical times (Muravyeva, 2013). It continues to endure as a serious, widespread, global problem (World Health Organization, 2010). DVA permeates society stretching across socio-economic groups: sex-class and cultural groups (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014; World Health Organization, 2005). The sheer breadth of this phenomenon makes any consensus as to what DVA comprises difficult. Historically the discourse which sought to describe this phenomenon placed undue emphasis on an incident of physical abuse (Harne & Radford, 2008). Advocates for change argued that the discourse around DVA must reflect the broad range and pattern of abuse which it encompasses (Home Office, 2012). As a result, a definition has developed which encompasses the coercive, intimidating and controlling nature of abuse which is perpetrated over a period of time (Home Office, 2015b; Strickland, 2013). In 2013, the Home Office thus extended the definition of DVA to include:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or

over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass but is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional (Home Office, 2013b, p. 2).

The definition pays particular attention to the notion of coercive and controlling behaviours, the latter is defined as any behaviour designed to ‘make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour’ (Home Office, 2013b, p. 2). It is this Home Office definition of DVA which was adopted as a framework for this project. This shift in understandings of DVA is significant in the context of this study. The women who took part provided accounts which moved away from viewing DVA as being incident specific: linked to match or tournament. They spoke of violence, but they also detailed chronic, controlling and coercive behaviours which they associated with their partner’s consumption of sport.

In this thesis I take a gendered approach to DVA recognising that the ‘majority of those who directly experience abuse are women and the majority of perpetrators are men’ (World Health Organization, 2010, p. 4). It is estimated that globally intimate partner violence is the most common type of violence experienced by women with 30% of women worldwide having endured such abuse (World Health Organization, 2014a). In the context of England and Wales, the CPS data for criminal prosecutions (which were recorded as being DVA related) during 2015 and 2016 revealed that over 90% of the defendants identified as being male and over 80% of the ‘victims’ identified as female (Crown Prosecution Service, 2016). The scale of DVA is reflected in the World Health Organization proclamation that violence against women has become ‘a global public health problem of epidemic proportions’ (World Health Organization, 2014a, p. 3).

The impact of DVA transcends individuals to affect families, communities and society at large (World Health Organization, 2010). For those who experience DVA it can have profound implications on their health resulting in permanent injury, long term damage to mental health and sometimes death (Harne & Radford, 2008; Mirrlees-Black & Byron, 1999; Walby & Myhill, 2001). Non-physical abuse such as emotional and psychological abuse is now recognised as having an equally if not more devastating effect and longer lasting consequences than physical abuse (Stark, 2007).

Sport and violence have been associated in many and varied manifestations. Orwell commented '[s]erious sport has nothing to do with fair play. It is bound up with hatred, jealousy, boastfulness, disregard of all rules and sadistic pleasure in witnessing violence. In other words, it is war minus the shooting' (Orwell, 1945, p. 41). No examination of sport can be complete without taking into account its complex and inevitable connection with violence (Guilbert, 2004; Jewell, Moti, & Coates, 2012). It is argued that 'violence and disorderly incidents have occurred in almost all settings where sport occupies cultural significance' (Young, 2012, p. xi). Within the context of this study academics across the disciplines have explored the interplay between sport (particularly combat sport) and violence within intimate relationships. This examination has included an exploration of the impact athletic association may have on negative attitudes towards women and further an interrogation of the nature of male athletes' intimate relationships with women (for example: Crosset, 2000; McCray, 2014; Milner & Baker, 2015; Murnen & Kohlman, 2007; Pappas, 2004).

This study was not concerned with the athlete but rather with the sports fan. A body of inter-disciplinary research has explored the association between combat sport and an increase in DVA incidence. The majority of these mainly older studies were conducted in the United States and considered combat sports which are not culturally significant within the United Kingdom such as Professional (American) Football (Gantz, Wang, & Bradley, 2006; Palmer, 2011b; Sachs & Chu, 2000; White, Katz, & Scarborough, 1992). Within the United Kingdom the nexus between football and an increase in DVA has received some scholarly attention (Crowley, Brooks, & Lombard, 2014; Palmer, 2011b). The research has generally been quantitative in nature and reliant on police data regarding DVA reporting (Brimicombe & Cafe, 2012; Kirby, Francis, & O'Flaherty, 2014; Williams, Neville, House, & Donnelly, 2013). The purpose of such research has primarily been to probe 'Does domestic violence really go up when big sports matches are on?' (Brimicombe & Cafe, 2012, p. 1). The literature has tended to suggest an increase in DV reporting to the police around the time of the specific match or tournament under investigation. It has emphasised and exposed the very complex task which any examination into combat sport and its possible association with DVA entails. As will be seen these studies may be critiqued for their heavy reliance on police data, a course which might be considered problematic.

Existing scholarly research has not interrogated the interplay between DVA and sport from the perspective of women who have experienced abuse (Palmer, 2011b; Williams & Neville, 2014). The purpose of this study has been to explore this lacuna; conducted from the viewpoint of women who have experienced DVA, it has explored how a perpetrator's interest in sport (particularly football) influenced the abuse the women

endured. The voices of this marginalised group have thus far been neglected in the research process. As far as I have been able to determine only two previous studies have been published in this field which can be said to draw broad parallels with this research project. The first of these studies was conducted in the United States when, at the turn of the millennium, Sabo and his colleagues interviewed women whose partners inflicted violence on them around the time of televised athletic events (Sabo, Gray, & Moore, 2000). Further research has been carried out in the north of England which took as its focus the concept that sport gave ‘permissions’ for violence which included DV. Unlike this research project, however, the researchers investigated how sport might condone DV as opposed to exploring the women’s experiences of DVA (Radford & Hudson, 2005).

1.3 Study aims

The aim of this research project has been to scrutinise the interplay between DVA and sport (particularly team combat sport) from the perspective of women who have sustained such abuse.

The study had two main objectives:

- To investigate the women’s experiences of DVA in the context of their abusive partners’ sporting interests.
- To explore the factors identified by the women as creating an association between such sporting interests and the abuse they endured.

1.4 Plan of the thesis

In the section below I present an explanation of how this study was conducted. This section includes a summary of the research tools I employed and an introduction to the theoretical frameworks which have informed this study.

As research which takes the sensitive topic of DVA as its focus, this study has required close ethical scrutiny and careful planning from the outset (World Health Organization, 2001). It has respected the autonomy of the women who took part and was guided by an ongoing concern for their well-being (Campbell, Adams, Wasco, Ahrens, & Sefl, 2010; Oakley, 1981). The fieldwork was conducted in two distinct phases: the summer of 2014 and the spring of 2015. These time periods were chosen as team combat sport tournaments in the form of the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) World Cup (2014) and the Rugby Union Six Nations Championship (2015) were taking place. Whilst the FIFA World Cup was reflected in

some of the studies reviewed for this thesis, this was not the case for the Rugby Union Six Nations Championship. These two phases were, nonetheless, chosen as it was hoped that the widespread media attention which surrounded these events might capture the interest of the gatekeepers and potential participants prompting their interest and propelling them to take part in this study.

The women who participated were accessed through gatekeepers, typically refuge or outreach services which offered support to women who had experienced DVA. The difficulties I encountered in gaining access to this marginalised group (Abrahams, 2007) are discussed in detail in chapter five. Purposive sampling was employed as a means to recruit women to take part (Bryman, 2012). The flyer which promoted this research (see appendix one) was available at the gatekeepers' premises and this outlined the broad nature of this study. In this way women who had experiences relevant to the research aims were invited to take part. A qualitative design was adopted and semi-structured interviews were employed as a suitable means to explore the depth and richness of the women's experiences (Seidman, 2012).

This study has not been theoretically driven by any single epistemic viewpoint but rather framed by two ostensibly contesting frameworks namely: feminist standpoint epistemologically (FSE) and Lacanian theory. This thesis did not seek to create a union between these frameworks. They have not always worked in harmony, rather, they have been engaged to run side by side to create an interesting and novel approach to this topic.

Ontologically this study has adopted an understanding that we live in a gendered society in which women face multiple oppressions (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). This study has been grounded in women's lived experiences; aligning with FSE it has argued that women present as a multifaceted, repressed group (Hill Collins, 1990b). It is through such oppression that they are better able to present an understanding of the nature of reality (Hartsock, 1987), and better equipped to generate knowledge about the world in which they subsist (Harding, 1980). In this way this sex classed position insists that subjugated women offer a clearer vantage point from which to view their own oppression (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). It is incumbent on a researcher adopting such a lens to pay particular attention to the balance of power within the research process (Harding, 1997). The stages of planning and fieldwork were predominantly influenced by this feminist led framework. It underpinned the ethical considerations in particular which included the manner and means of contact with the women who took part.

At the latter stages of analysis Lacanian theory was appropriated and employed with precision. This psychoanalytic approach presented a novel and challenging means through which DVA could be explored (Shaw, 2005). The subject's self-construction is central to Lacanian thought, he suggested that 'self' is an illusion through which the human subject seeks to understand their experiences (Lacan, 2004). It was this emphasis on the construction of self which made a Lacanian lens an appealing framework through which DVA might be scrutinised. Adopting Lacan's model of the Real, the Symbolic and the Imaginary (Lacan, 1974) the women's accounts were thus explored. These concepts were deployed with precision (Seshadri-Crooks, 2002) and it was through this triad that a meaning was ascribed to the narratives the women provided.

1.5 Personal location

All research comes from somewhere and this thesis has been largely influenced by my professional experiences. In the section below I trace the pathway which led me to research DVA and this research topic in particular. This emphasis on personal location is not recounted out of some sort of need as a researcher to 'get lost in endless narcissistic personal emoting' (Finlay, 2002, p. 202) but rather highlighted as part of a wider recognition that the personal element of the researcher impacts on, and contributes to the research process (DeVault, 1997). My personal location was important throughout this study informing and shaping the choices I made (Crotty, 1998). As will be seen, there have been many times during this project when I have had to negotiate between who I am and what it is this study has set out to explore; these periods of tension and, at times confusion appear in this thesis as they arose.

This project has been framed by my wide ranging professional experiences. My diverse career path has been marked by a commitment, in different guises, to hear the voices of marginalised groups. At the time of writing this thesis I am working in the field of mental health but this has not always been the case. For many years, I worked as a criminal barrister specialising in cases which were classified as including 'vulnerable witnesses' a term which encompassed both adults and children. My practice was dominated by a workload which concerned allegations of abuse in all its manifestations. As a barrister I was always an observer: my clinical, professional obligation was to build a case around the statements I read. This duty of impartiality distracted, and to some extent, anaesthetised me from an interest in the people behind the cases.

After I left the Bar I lectured at an undergraduate level on a module called 'Domestic Abuse'. This deepened my academic interest and also my understanding of DVA. It was through this work I became aware of that body of literature which took the association between sporting events and DVA as its focus. It was an area of research which interested me and in turn my students. I saw a gap in the literature, in that most of the studies were quantitative in nature and I deliberated why this might be. The impetus for this research project stems from that curiosity. I have therefore been very fortunate that this thesis has been borne of a real and very genuine interest in my research topic.

Whilst lecturing I was engaged as an independent legal advisor by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). This role was created as part of a national initiative when the criminal justice agencies led by the CPS were obliged to scrutinise how witnesses were treated in cases of hate crime, paying particular attention to those crimes which involved violence against women. This task was very different from anything I had worked on previously in that I was obliged to analyse critically the ways in which female 'victims' had been treated by the criminal justice system. This undertaking made DVA very real for me and I was permitted to put aside the sanitized notion of witnesses which had hitherto dominated my professional past; for the first time I was able to appreciate the impact the abuse and the criminal process had on the female witnesses. Through this role I came to value how the women were the providers of knowledge borne of their subjugated experiences (Harding, 1980). My involvement in this initiative shaped my resolve that this study would take as its focus the voices of the women who had experienced abuse. Further, it heightened my commitment that the women would not be regarded as objects of study but rather as real people with stories to tell (Stanley & Wise, 2002). In this way the foundations were laid that the women and I would work to co-construct the knowledge which would be produced (Burr, 2015).

1.6 Terminology used in the thesis

DVA is a global phenomenon and it is therefore unsurprising that there is no single accepted terminology which may be employed to describe this type of behaviour. The women who took part in this study described a range of behaviours which they had endured during their abusive relationships which included physical and sexual violence (or the threat of such violence), as well as emotional and psychological abuse which included intimidation and alienation. In this study, I used the terminology 'domestic violence' (DV) at the stages of data collection and 'domestic violence and

abuse' (DVA) elsewhere in this thesis. The exception to this is where an author is acknowledged in which case I have adopted the terminology they have utilised. The debate encompassing the discourse surrounding DVA and the rationale for the terminology adopted by this study is examined in detail in chapter two (see chapter 2.5).

1.7 Conventions used in the thesis

Ontologically and epistemically this thesis has rejected the conventional, masculinist notion of the research object (Reinharz & Davidman, 1992; Smith, 1987). Accordingly, it has been vital to have regard not only to what has been written but to how it has been written. As Stanley and Wise caution 'words, sentences, writing styles, ways of presenting arguments, arguments themselves, criticism, all these are part and parcel of masculinist culture' (Stanley & Wise, 2002, p. 190). This, to some extent, resonates with Irigaray when she argues that phallogentrism is reproduced through Lacanian theory which serves to represent a system of male privileges (Irigaray, 1985a). Paying attention to my writing style, as a means of affirming and asserting my ontological and epistemic foundations, has been crucial. It is argued that silent authorship is often used in positivist research most commonly the natural sciences and is ostensibly regarded as 'the hallmark of mature scholarship' (Gray, 2017, p. 180). In contrast, the first person presence is more often employed in the social sciences as an authorial presence which deepens self-awareness and thus connotes reflexivity (May, 2011). Arguably such an approach offers a richer understanding of both researcher and the 'subject' (Gray, 2017). I considered that such an authoritarian presence, aligned with my ontological and epistemological positions regarding the power balance between the women who took part and myself. Such a position also reflects the reality that I have been present throughout this project (Burr, 2015).

1.8 Structure of the thesis

In this section I present a brief description of the chapters contained within this thesis.

Chapters two and three comprise a critical review of the literature which has informed this study. Chapter two outlines the backdrop which has framed contemporary interpretations of DVA. The global status of DVA is acknowledged before deeper consideration is given to our cultural understandings of this phenomenon in the United Kingdom. The background to the existing Governmental definition and the legislative framework which now applies to DVA in England and Wales is explored.

Chapter three presents an examination of the nexus between men, sport (especially combat sport) and negative attitudes towards women; specific attention is paid to research which has taken the association between team combat sport and DVA as its focus. In this way, chapters two and three highlight the gap in the existing literature which this study sought to fill.

Chapter four takes as its focus the theoretical approaches which have influenced this study. The chapter begins with an examination of feminist theory before going on to explore FSE in particular. It discusses the benefits such a lens may confer to such a sensitive research area which involves women who have experienced DVA. Lacanian theory is then introduced. I argue that Lacan's emphasis on identity and self-constitution make his theory apt to this study which has, at its core, the relationship between subjects. Concepts central to Lacan's work are presented and examined in detail: the Mirror Stage, the Real, the Symbolic, the Imaginary and desire. It is these concepts which were adopted to unlock meanings provided by the women's accounts. The chapter traces my route to these diverse frameworks before explaining how they have been deployed within this thesis. The chapter concludes with a critical examination of how these seemingly divergent perspectives, FSE and Lacanian theory, could be brought together constructively to explore the women's accounts and interrogate DVA.

Chapter five describes and justifies the methods which I adopted in planning and carrying out this research. A qualitative strategy was utilised and the rationale for such an approach is discussed. Fidelity and reflexivity are important facets which are explored in this chapter in the context of my aim to produce rigorous research. Research involving DVA involves careful planning and implementation: the main body of the chapter takes as its focus issues which were particularly important in the context of this sensitive research such as ethical considerations, access, consent and anonymity and risk reduction strategies for those who took part and myself. The chapter discusses how the use of semi-structured interviews were deployed as a means of data collection. The chapter concludes by exploring how I carried out the task of data analysis.

Chapter six introduces the women who took part in this study. It acts as a foundation to the analysis and interpretation chapters which follow (chapters seven, eight, nine and ten). The chapter provides a synopsis of what each woman who took part in this study told me about themselves, their partners and the abuse they endured. To ensure anonymity no identifiable information is included.

Chapters seven through to ten are devoted to an analysis and discussion of the women's experiences of the association between the abuse they endure and their partners' consumption of sport. As will be seen the women spoke of a range of sports but the accounts were dominated by football. These chapters set out to explore the women's experiences in the context of the existing literature. Suggestions for new directions of study are embedded within the chapters as they arise, which are later pulled together in chapter ten. The Lacanian model of the Real, the Symbolic and the Imaginary (RSI) is deployed to unfurl these accounts, offering an interpretation of the women's experiences. A recurring theme throughout these complex accounts is the notion of desire so central to Lacanian thought. To structure these investigations, chapters seven through to nine are divided into three broad themes: the perpetrator (chapter seven), the abuse (chapter eight) and living within an abusive relationship (chapter nine). These are outlined in turn below:

Chapter seven reveals the women's insights regarding their abusive partners and their relationship with sport, typically football. As will be seen these men were portrayed as adopting dual identities where the abuse they inflicted was kept hidden from friends and family. The women described how the perpetrators perceived some sports as being institutions which sustained and reproduced an enhanced notion of male supremacy. Finally, the way in which these abusive men consumed their favoured sport is investigated. For some of the abusive men, male dominated peer groups were significant and these groups are discussed as is the nexus between alcohol use and watching sport.

Chapter eight explores the range of abuse the women endured, this included: physical assault, sexual violence, emotional and psychological abuse in various manifestations. The multifaceted and pernicious nature of DVA is laid bare when the women relate their experiences of the interplay between sporting events and DVA. The chapter exposes how the abusive men used the notion of male superiority, which they associated with some sporting activities, to subjugate the women. The role of alcohol is analysed. In the context of football in particular, a game's score or an unwanted sporting outcome had an impact on the abuse some of the women endured and this aspect of the abusive partner's behaviour is scrutinised.

Chapter nine offers an overview of what the women said about the reality of living in an environment where they were under the constant threat of

abuse. The women depicted a private life dominated by fear and anxiety. They were, however, not passive and this chapter reveals how they used their intimate knowledge of the abusive partner which included his sports fandom, as a resource they called upon in an attempt to limit or control the abuse they endured. The chapter concludes with the women reflecting on the abusive relationships and longer-term impact this abuse has had on them and their relationship with sport.

Chapter ten brings together the threads of the three preceding chapters (chapters seven through to nine). It reflects on the analysis and discussion and posits ‘what does this study tell us?’ Structured to take account of prevalence rates, the perpetrator and the abuse, I argue that this study has made a significant novel contribution to existing literature by unpicking and exploring the women’s accounts of the dynamics of DVA and its association with their partners’ sporting interests, offering new insights regarding the prevalence of such abuse. Fundamentally, this study suggests these abusive men fed into an elevated notion of male supremacy offered by some sporting activities to maintain power and perpetuate abuse. Finally, I argue that the women’s accounts offer much needed insights into the wide range of abusive behaviours which may be associated with DVA and aspects of sports fandom. I suggest that the women’s accounts strengthen and enrich this area of study by offering new perceptions regarding the interplay between DVA and sport, and team combat sport in particular.

Chapter eleven concludes this thesis. It revisits the aims of this project and considers whether they have been met. It reviews the contribution this study has made to existing research before offering two key points which emerge from this study. The chapter ends with some closing comments.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Structure of literature review chapters

Taken together chapters two and three present a review of the literature which has shaped this study. The chapters make explicit the lacuna in the existing literature and identify how this study aimed to contribute to existing knowledge in this field. The review is presented across two parts: the current chapter incorporates part one which takes DVA as its focus. The naming, defining and the prevalence of DVA are all examined. There has been a shift in understandings of DVA from an incident specific event to a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviours. This chapter chronicles that shift; it explores how theory and practice which surrounds DVA has transformed our understandings of this complex and sensitive phenomenon. This change was significant in the context of this study. The women who took part moved away from the notion, which dominated past research, of an incident of abuse linked to a specific sporting event or tournament. The chapter presents the historical backdrop to DVA before exploring the legislative structure which has evolved to frame the current formal response to DVA in England and Wales. The chapter goes on to provide some insights regarding the reality of living within an abusive relationship. The chapter concludes by presenting a critical synopsis of the major theoretical explanations which have been employed to investigate this phenomenon.

Chapter three encompasses the second part of the literature review. It interrogates men, sport and negative attitudes towards women. The association between sport and violence is briefly acknowledged before the chapter moves on to trace the history of modern organized sport. The chapter presents an examination of the mainly feminist led literature which has taken as its focus the interplay between masculinities and sport. The chapter presents an examination of that body of scholarly research which has considered the athlete and their association with violence against women. Enquiry then turns to exploring what association may exist between sports events, mainly models of football and DVA: prevalence is discussed before an interrogation of the theoretical frameworks which have sought to explain this nexus. The chapter closes by considering the nature and role of media campaigns which have been directed at the potential for an escalation in reporting DVA around the time of sports events.

2.2 Literature review strategy

The literature review sought to shape my project; reading and evaluating these materials was a lengthy and necessary process which increased my knowledge and understanding of the research topic. Whilst an initial overview was conducted at the beginning of my research journey, gathering and reviewing literature was an ongoing process throughout the period of the thesis. A considerable amount of materials (856 sources) were collected between 2013-2017. They were catalogued using Endnote, a software tool for storing and managing references and citation notes.

A detailed search of resources available within the University of Chester was initially undertaken. Some of the materials that I required were unavailable and in several incidences the inter library loan system, the SCONUL facility or the document supply network was utilised. Some resources were out of print, rare or specialised and these were made available to me through the British Library loan scheme. The most up-to-date, useful and fruitful sources of information were obtained by online search engines and data bases. These included but were not limited to Athens, Zetoc, EBSCO, Google Scholar, Google Books, Web of Science, SocINDEX and IBSS. Further, I accessed several doctoral theses through ETHOS (the British Library). In some instances, hand searches were carried out from the reference lists of key texts and in this way further materials were identified. The materials were initially filtered to include only those which were available (either originally or through translation) in the English language. The search criteria were kept purposely broad with a wide range of terms deployed either on their own or in combination. The terms included, but were not limited to: 'domestic violence', 'domestic violence and abuse' 'intimate personal violence', 'spousal abuse', "intimate terrorism", 'wife battering', 'family violence', 'family battery', 'sport and violence', 'athletes and abuse', 'sport and domestic violence'. The criteria intentionally incorporated terms frequently used by American, Canadian and Australian scholars so as to uncover a broader range of materials.

Initially, resources were identified from across the disciplines in the form of articles, books, conference papers and theses. I filtered the articles and journals to only include those which had been peer reviewed. The search also uncovered an amount of grey literature which encompassed online blogs, press and other publications by organizations such as Women's Aid and Alcohol Concern. Exclusion was achieved by only including materials published by, or linked to, national institutions or charities. The initial search was not limited to any one field of study and I negotiated interdisciplinary boundaries, however, as the focus of my thesis refined I edited the initial collection of references: for example, the disciplines of law and sociology were considered most relevant and given priority over fields of study such as criminology.

This thesis pertains to the legal framework as it operates within England and Wales¹ and as such materials which were outside this jurisdiction were disregarded.

As the review is restrained by a word count and given the breadth of possible literature which might be included, it was important to only include the materials which I considered to be most relevant to the substantive focus of the study and the research approach. By way of example, the extensive literature which considers sport and violence was condensed and prominence given to research which takes as its focus combat sport and negative attitudes towards women.

Part One - Domestic Violence and Abuse

2.3 Introduction

DVA is a widespread, global issue. It crosses boundaries such as socio-economic class, race and religion (World Health Organization, 2001). DVA is not confined by relationship status, gender or sexuality (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014; Home Office, 2013b; World Health Organization, 1996). In the context of violence against women the United Nations General Assembly have defined it thus:

Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life (Declaration No: A/RES/487104, 1993, p. 9).

DVA is unique as a phenomenon which is conditional upon the nature of the ‘victim’ and perpetrator relationship (Robinson, 2010). It includes current and past intimate relationships, whether or not they are formalised by the state, family relations and same-sex relationships. It endures as a significant issue for society. It can have serious and lasting repercussions for those involved in it resulting in mental and physical harm and in some cases death (Baty, Alhusen, Campbell, & Sharps, 2008; Home Office, 2005; World Health Organization, 2005, 2014a). In the section below I examine what is known of the prevalence of DVA.

¹ Scotland subsists under its own distinct legal jurisdiction.

2.4 Prevalence of domestic violence and abuse

DVA often occurs out of the public eye and commonly the only witnesses are those involved in the abuse or others living in the same household (Dar, 2013). Those who have been subjected to abuse may have difficulty in identifying this behaviour as abusive, or for many other reasons, may be reluctant to report what has happened to them (Harne & Radford, 2008; Kelly & Radford, 1990; Walby & Allen, 2004). It is the hidden nature of DVA that when combined with other difficulties that makes any assessment of the scale of the problem difficult; research is reliant upon 'respondents' willingness to share their personal experiences which can be sensitive' (Nevala, 2017, p. 23). Whilst accepting that data might offer a wider context for DVA, academics have regarded statistical data with a degree of caution (Walby, Towers, & Francis, 2014).

The World Health Organization has pronounced violence against women as 'endemic' (World Health Organization, 2001, p. 4). It is estimated that globally intimate partner violence (including sexual violence) affects about 30% of women at some point in their lives (World Health Organization, 2014a). The study reported on an average figure it was based on regional variances ranging from over 45% of women in Africa to 27.2% of women in Europe experiencing such abuse; later data made available to the researchers revealed a prevalence rate of up to 68% in the Western Pacific region (World Health Organization, 2014a). Closer to home, a European study which interviewed 42,000 women across 28 of the European Union (EU) member states (including the United Kingdom) revealed that one in three women had experienced physical or sexual abuse since the age of 15 (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014). It concluded that violence against women is a 'pervasive problem' in the EU (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014, p. 50). In the United Kingdom the police receive a telephone call involving a domestic violence incident every minute (Stanko, 2001). It is estimated that domestic violence costs the public purse about 15.7 million pounds a year (Walby, 2004). The Office of National Statistics compiles data which includes estimates from the Crime Survey for England and Wales, Home Office incident and police recorded crime and outcomes data as well as CPS data (referrals, prosecutions and convictions). They have estimated that 6% adults (aged 16 to 59) experienced domestic abuse during 2015 (Office for National Statistics, 2016). For women the statistics are more stark; about 30% of women in the United Kingdom have experienced domestic abuse since the age of 16 years (Office for National Statistics, 2014).

These statistics reflect the critical gendered aspect of DVA, that is not to say that men do not experience DVA, as they clearly do. The consistent findings that women are more likely to report such abuse have fuelled the extensive academic debate regarding the role gender plays in DVA (Dutton, 2011; Dutton & Nicholls, 2005; Johnson, 2011; Johnson, Leone, & Xu, 2014; Kimmel, 2008). This study is underpinned by the belief that globally, and within the United Kingdom, women must be viewed as more likely to experience DVA than men (Kimmel, 2008; Walby & Allen, 2004). Evidence suggests that the overwhelming majority of those who seek assistance through law enforcement, medical services and other agencies are women (Harne & Radford, 2008). In 'domestic violence' prosecutions in England and Wales over 90% of defendants have identified as being male whilst 80% of the 'victims' have identified as being female (Crown Prosecution Service, 2016). In England and Wales, the Crime Survey for England and Wales is considered a relatively reliable and comprehensive source of data in relation to DVA (Dar, 2013). The survey is geographically limited to England and Wales and it excludes older people - being restricted to those aged between 16 to 59 years. The survey has been criticized regarding DVA for its lack of context and meaning and further, for excluding those living in refuges and temporary accommodation (Harne & Radford, 2008). The survey is concerned with participants' experiences and not reliant on crimes reported to the police - so that those who do not seek the assistance of the criminal justice agencies are included. As part of its remit, the survey encompasses a self-completion module on 'intimate violence' which incorporates *inter alia* emotional, sexual and physical abuse by partners and family members. The British Crime Surveys have been consistent in identifying DVA as a significant, gendered issue with the most recent data confirming that women were more likely to be 'victims' of domestic abuse (DA) than other demographic groups² (Office for National Statistics, 2017). As highlighted later in this review (Chapter 2.5) those seeking to investigate this sensitive phenomenon may be hindered by the inconsistent and uncertain terminology as reflected in the studies considered above. Whilst it remains the case that it is women who are more likely to report being 'victims' of DVA the recent statistics relating to male abuse highlighted above (Office for National Statistics, 2017) emphasise the problem this type of behaviour represents for society at large.

Findings suggest that typically male perpetrators are far more likely than women to use physical violence, threats and harassment (Hester, 2009). The abuse which

²Over 11% of all women aged 16 to 19 were 'victims' of DA compared to 6.9% of men over the same period.

women endure is therefore more dangerous and severe (Archer, 2006; Hester, 2009; Mirrlees-Black & Byron, 1999; Walby & Allen, 2004). As Kimmel opines:

...the evidence is overwhelming that *gender* asymmetry in domestic violence remains in full effect. Men *are* more violent than women, both within the home and in the public sphere. The home is not a refuge from violence nor is it a site where gender differences in the public sphere are magically reversed (Kimmel, 2008, p. 34).

It could be argued that there may be cultural issues regarding how men view the abuse they endure so that further nuanced, interrogation is required.

Historically attempts to track DVA particularly within official police/CPS data have been hampered by the absence of a legal or statutory definition (Dar, 2013) and, as will be seen later in this chapter, it was relatively recently that coercive control became a criminal offence (Serious Crime Act 2015). According to Walby and Allen DVA has a high rate of repeat victimisation so that the same women are experiencing abuse over and over again (Walby & Allen, 2004). It is estimated that in EU just 14% of complaints reach the police (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014). In the United Kingdom 79% of 'victims' do not report abuse to the police and when they do make a complaint the majority of the cases do not go on to be recorded as a crime (Office for National Statistics, 2016). Whilst such a disparity must ostensibly be a matter of concern there may be many factors which account for this discrepancy: the complainant may possibly 'use' the intervention of services as a means of removing a perpetrator or deescalating a situation so that whilst a crime has not been recorded the victim has been empowered by the intervention of services and their autonomy confirmed. Finally, it is worthy of note that DVA cases have an inordinately high retraction rate³ of over 20% compared with 11% more generally and this impacts on conviction rates (Crown Prosecution Service, 2013, 2016). There may be several reasons for this reluctance to support a prosecution: complainants might want to 'move on' once the immediacy of a situation has been resolved from their perspective, alternatively they may want a relationship to continue in some form, particularly where children are involved, or perhaps they fear retaliation from the perpetrator or their family should a court case proceed.

³ The complainant withdraws a statement which may hinder a successful prosecution.

2.5 Terminology

The purpose of this summary is to provide a brief exploration of the terminology which has been used to describe DVA. It goes on to discuss the sensitivities involved in describing the category of people who have been subjected to such abuse. Recognising that language in this area of research is important, sensitive and potentially problematic, I confronted this contentious issue early on in my project and the section offers a rationale for the terms I employed.

Wide and varied terminology has been adopted across the disciplines in an attempt to define DVA, yet there is no consensus regarding a universally accepted term, as researchers fail to agree on what the terminology actually denotes (Kahn, 2009; Leander, 2002). The ongoing debate regarding terminology reflects the diverse conceptual and theoretical framings around this culturally sensitive topic (Radford & Hester, 2006). The controversy survives, fuelled and rejuvenated by changing social attitudes and an increasing awareness of DVA (Kelly & Radford, 1998).

Some of the terms used to describe this type of behaviour have accentuated women as the recipients of abuse; examples include 'wife battering' and 'violence against women'. These and similar terms have been open to criticism for placing undue emphasis on the sex class of the victim rather than exposing that of the instigator (Pahl as cited in Mullender, 2002). Conversely, gender neutral terminology such as 'intimate partner violence' (IPV) and 'domestic abuse' (DA) have attracted criticism for marginalising or ignoring the gendered nature of this phenomenon (Robinson, 2010). Finally, expressions which seek to identify a contextual relationship for the abuse such as 'family abuse', 'spousal abuse' or 'wife abuse' have been condemned for presupposing that abuse may only occur within an established or conventional relationship structure (Radford & Hester, 2006).

Since the 1970s the feminist movement has adopted a range of terms including domestic violence (DV) to describe abuse within the private sphere (Walsh, Spangaro, & Soldatic, 2015). It is suggested that DV effectively conveys the 'brutality, breadth and depth of the behaviours and actions which constitute the phenomenon' (Lavis, Horrocks, Kelly, & Barker, 2005, p. 442). Its history and universality accounts for the continued use of DV and its ongoing popularity amongst women's groups (Radford & Hester, 2006). Whereas critics argue that the word 'domestic' presupposes the setting for the abuse as being confined to the home thus disregarding the real and significant risk women face post separation (Leander, 2002; Radford & Hester, 2006; Rezey, 2017). For some, the word 'domestic' demeans the unique character of the abuse:

...relegation of any form of violence to 'domestic' belittles it and reduces it to the private sphere where it ceases to be important. Indeed giving any form of violence a name which does not address its nature and causation diminishes its importance (Maguire, 1988, p. 34).

Others take issue with the word 'violence' in this context suggesting that it masks the reality of living in an abusive relationship, neglecting that abuse which is outside the realms of violence (Kahn, 2009; Mullender, 2002; Walsh et al., 2015). According to Mullender 'the word 'violence' conveys an incomplete impression, since men's ill-treatment of women takes many forms which combine together into a pattern of intimidation, humiliation and control' (Mullender, 2002, p. 8). Such an argument demonstrates the complexity in identifying a term which reflects the element of control that is typical in most abusive relationships (Stark, 2010).

During this project, I selected DV as an appropriate term to use during my fieldwork. I considered its strength lay in its common everyday parlance and that there could be no misunderstanding as to the broad nature of my project. Acknowledging the limitations of such a term I took steps which sought to redress any ambiguity: I carefully and clearly explained to both gatekeepers and participants alike that my study incorporated a range of abusive behaviours and was not limited to violence. I made it clear that the location of the abuse was not an inclusionary or exclusionary factor. My project was gender specific and this was also emphasised at the outset.

Within the United Kingdom DVA has emerged as a mainstream phrase employed to reflect this form of abuse (Home Office, 2013b). This contemporary terminology arguably reflects the familiar relationship between the abuser and abused whilst connoting the depth and range of abusive behaviours. In writing up this thesis I adopted the terminology DVA in line with the Governmental definition (Home Office, 2013a, 2013b). I have, nonetheless, maintained some reservations that the phrase DVA does not emphasise how abuse is a gendered issue: mainly abuse perpetrated by men against women. Notwithstanding the intense academic debate regarding terminology as outlined above, my choice of language did not become an issue at any stage during the research process. Upon reflection, I consider the use of two distinct terms of DV and DVA utilised during this process was possibly superfluous.

Before leaving terminology a brief word about those who experience such abuse as they do not escape this academic debate. It is suggested the expression 'victim' is invested with images of individual responsibility and blame (Kirkwood, 1993; Radford & Hester, 2006). Whereas the word 'survivor' does not adequately reflect the long-

term effects of abuse and conjures up an 'heroic image of women who had lived through violence and all the consequences of abuse and emerged the other side as stronger people' (Radford & Hester, 2006, p. 39).

Throughout this thesis, I have preferred the phrase 'women who have experienced domestic violence and abuse' to describe those who took part. This course reflected my ontological foundations that the women should be visible throughout and not merely regarded as the objects of study.

To provide a cultural context in this research project, the section below chronicles the history of DVA; embedded within this examination is the legislative framework which currently exists in England and Wales around DVA.

2.6 The historical and legal context of domestic violence and abuse

This section traces the evolution and cultural shift in our comprehension of, and approaches to, DVA. As a lawyer, I have a biased interest towards the law, nonetheless, I would suggest that as the law and legal process remain the central response to DVA the legislative changes outlined below form an appropriate backdrop to this study by chronicling how DVA is currently understood. Whether the law can effectively address DVA remains open to debate: this chapter explores how legislative changes can pre-empt, reflect or react to social attitudes regarding DVA and in what ways the law has sought to reflect the changing dynamics of such abuse.

In the section below, I trace the move away from a paradigm which viewed DVA as being incident specific: often equated with an incident of physical and psychological abuse. As will be seen, the current, broader understandings of DVA are important within the context of this study when it is argued that past research may be viewed as having been framed by definitions which contemporary scholars reject as not reflecting the wider dynamics of DVA (Stark, 2007).

2.6.1 Domestic violence and abuse in history

Evident throughout the centuries, DVA must not be regarded as a product of modern society (World Health Organization, 2005). It presents against an historical and cultural ideology where it was considered a private matter (Dobash & Dobash, 1979). It is this concealed nature of DVA combined with the lack of formal records which has served to partly obscure its historical roots (Muravyeva, 2013). DVA can be traced back to Roman times and beyond (Hunt & Martin, 2001); references in the Bible offer support for the notion that women were to be considered the weaker sex, to be tolerated and controlled by men (Muravyeva, 2013). Later, fifteenth-century accounts reveal that the ill-treatment of women by their partners was to be viewed as a husband's right in that such actions were commonplace and often condoned by society (Powell, 1917).

It was not until the nineteenth-century that the first wave of feminism adopted DVA as a key tenet (Walters, 2005). They sought reform at a time when 'wife torture' was endemic and socially accepted (Cobbe, 1878; Walters, 2005). The introduction of the Offences Against the Person Act (1861) presented the first step towards radical and widespread change in the law relating to assault. The Act redefined and clarified the law on assault and although not specific to DVA it had manifest implications as judicial disapproval for DVA slowly materialized (Foyster, 2005). The Act remains important, its resultant offences remain amongst the most commonly deployed by prosecutors in the context of DVA⁴ (Crown Prosecution Service, 2013, 2016).

Within the civil jurisdiction, The Matrimonial Causes Act (1878) introduced cruelty for the first time as a ground for divorce. This new ground supplanted the former informal, archaic rule that 'a husband could not hit his wife with a stick broader than his thumb' (Hearn, 1998, p. 9). Under the new Act the lower courts were able to act quickly to grant a divorce decree to a woman who had been subjected to physical violence by her husband (Hearn, 1996). There followed a raft of legislation which aimed to address the financial independence of married women (Walters, 2005). These widespread and radical reforms acknowledged women's rights within marriage, as Hearne opines '[t]here had been little shift in the nature of men's authority over women in marriage. Men's day-to-day domination was routinely reinforced by the state for example in the avoidance in marital disputes by the police' (Hearn, 1996, p. 25). Changes in the law did not lead to concomitant changes in social attitudes.

⁴ Such as Section 39 - Common Assault, Section 47 - Assault Occasioning Actual Bodily Harm and Section 20 - Wounding.

Accordingly, the subordination of women remained long after the right of husbands to beat their wives was rejected by the law (Foyster, 2005). The early 1900s saw an upsurge in the feminist movement (Walters, 2005) and there followed a groundswell of protest as women gathered outside courts to draw attention to the inadequate sentences meted out for offences committed by men against women. The campaign was not, however, sustained and by the 1930's such protests had greatly reduced in number (Harne & Radford, 2008).

2.6.2 A movement for change

The second wave of feminism emerged after the Second World War and brought with it action as 'a remarkable variety of Western women picked up their pens' (Walters, 2005, p. 97). Over the decades which followed academics took the oppression of women as their focus: leading examples include, but are not in any way not limited to, the work of Simone de Beauvoir, Betty Friedan, bell hooks, and Patricia Hill Collins (De Beauvoir, 1988; Friedan, 1983; Hill Collins, 1990b; hooks, 1987). The feminist response to DVA was fortified by the formation of the Women's Liberation Movement in the 1970's (Dobash & Dobash, 2003; Hague & Malos, 2005; Harne & Radford, 2008). This move led to an increased awareness of DVA through public, policy and media campaigns (Harne & Radford, 2008; Skinner, Hester, & Malos, 2005). Despite the advances in knowledge DVA remained a low policing and governmental priority (Harne & Radford, 2008). Whereas the Government was slow to tackle DVA local women's groups listened and responded offering practical and emotional support to women and children experiencing DVA (Malos, 2000). The support they initially offered was basic; it included informal child sitting, staying in each other's homes and protecting women too afraid to return to their homes (Hague & Malos, 2005; Harne & Radford, 2008). The movement expanded and the refuge provision rapidly grew from a local response to a national organization (Dobash & Dobash, 2003). The following two decades saw the development and evolution of the refuge movement to include initiatives such as Rape Crisis which offered specialist support services to women (Skinner et al., 2005). From these beginnings the provision of services by women for women became a global phenomenon offering both practical and emotional support for women who experienced DVA:

Countless women from all over the world speak of the importance of the refuge in their lives: the value of escaping from violence, the importance of mutual support and solidarity; the end of isolation; and support for self-

reliance rather than continued dependence (Dobash & Dobash, 2003, p. 11).

It is argued that such services remain at the core of the women's movement today, acting as a base from which policy makers, public bodies and criminal justice agencies can be challenged and lobbied on behalf of women's groups (Dobash & Dobash, 2003; Hague & Mullender, 2005).

The 1960's had seen the enactment of the Matrimonial Homes Act (1967) which brought into focus the issue of occupation rights over the family home in the event of DVA. This legislation was followed by the Domestic Violence and Matrimonial Proceedings Act (1976) and then the Matrimonial Homes Act (1983) both of which gave extended powers in cases of DVA which included removing or excluding a party from the family home. The legislation included married couples but the courts also recognised the legitimacy of a relationship between those who were simply co-habiting. This legislation, which has been amended over the years, has been criticised for concentrating on the practicalities of living arrangements rather than confronting the underlying issues which surround DVA (Hearn, 1996).

It is argued that the late 1980s brought about a sea change in the police response to DVA as Domestic Violence Units emerged and forces were encouraged to turn away from viewing acts of DVA as domestic disputes between couples in private (Harne & Radford, 2008). It may be argued that the formation of such Units could be regarded as mere lip service to DVA activists and that real change could only be achieved through legislation which sought to tackle DVA itself. Although, change did come over the following decades, it was arguably piecemeal and reactive. In 1991 marital rape was recognised, for the first time, by the courts in England and Wales as being a criminal offence (Mullender, 2002), although it did not find itself on the statute books until three years later in 1994 (Act, 1994). Until this time, a woman was regarded to have universally consented to sexual intercourse with her husband upon marriage. Finally, a range of remedies for those who were harassed or stalked in the course of an intimate relationship came with the introduction of the Protection of Harassment Act 1997. The Act which crosses the boundaries of civil and criminal jurisdictions, whilst not exclusive to DVA, provides women with much needed protection particularly post-separation (Crown Prosecution Service, 2016). The Act is valuable and unique. It offers a practicable solution for a victim through a civil order whilst simultaneously punishing the offender through the Criminal Courts.

The turn of the millennium witnessed a continuing upsurge in legislation across the jurisdictions aimed at tackling violence against women and girls which included DVA. For the first time the legislature sought to reflect the cultural changes in society, and in doing so they aimed to address and identify risks which might present to women and girls. In 2003, the Female Genital Mutilation Act came into force which outlawed the arrangement and carrying out of this type of serious harm. This was followed by the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004) which introduced the notion of Domestic Homicide Review. The reviews which were enacted in 2011, require an examination of any death which has occurred as a result of a domestic violence incident. This measure, may be viewed as a commitment which underscored the weight that services attached to such killings, emphasised the need for ongoing education and the development of strategies to bring about change. The multifaceted nature of DVA continued to be reflected in the passing of the Anti-Social Crime and Policing Act in 2014 which introduced the criminalisation of forced marriages. This was aimed at addressing coerced marriage and arguably falls short in that arranged marriages are excluded, an omission which although nuanced, might serve to preclude many women and girls from legal redress for a pressurised marriage. The introduction of two ground-breaking schemes in relation to DVA were likewise introduced in 2014. The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, often referred to as ‘Clare’s law’ following the death of Clare Wood who was killed by her abusive partner, the scheme allows the police, in limited circumstances, to accede to a request by a member of the public to check their records regarding the history of a new or existing partner (Home Office, 2015a). The public might be forgiven for presupposing that the police would intervene in such a case, however legally they are unable to do so and the law which was introduced to protect victims may in fact offer as false sense of security. Finally, the notion that a victim is in a position to act on police information may be viewed as promoting the misconception that leaving an abusive relationship is an option open to many victims (see chapter 2.7).

Finally in 2014, Domestic Violence Protection Orders gave police and magistrates the power to ban temporarily perpetrators from returning to the family home after a DVA incident thus affording women valuable time to consider their options (Home Office, 2015a). It is argued that the scheme, whilst valuable, does not go far enough in protecting those who have experienced abuse, as dangerous perpetrators, will do anything within their power to maintain control (Neate, 2016). It acts as a temporary measure which does not address the underlying causes of DVA. These schemes two schemes mentioned above, were to act as the forerunners to arguably the most radical

piece of legislation regarding DVA, namely, the Serious Crime Act 2015 which is explored further below.

2.6.3 Coercive and controlling behaviours

The legislation examined in the section above reflected a transformation in the cultural understanding of DVA which was mirrored in the growth of public intolerance towards such abuse. Such a shift coincided with attention being paid as to how DVA should be defined and approached by the courts. Despite the difficulty in reaching a unified operational definition of DVA an array of socially constructed definitions have emerged (Garcia-Moreno, Jansen, Ellsberg, Heise, & Watts, 2006). They continue to develop as academics, scholars and researchers strive to understand this type of abuse (Barnish, 2004).

In England and Wales there is no formal statutory definition of DVA (Home Office, 2013b). A cross-governmental definition does exist which is uniformly adopted across agencies to provide a consistency of approach. In the early 2000's concerns grew that the meaning ascribed by the Government at that time placed undue emphasis on physical abuse, neglecting the pernicious, longitudinal elements of DVA which entailed a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviours (Dustin & Phillips, 2008; Harne & Radford, 2008). It was argued that confusion had arisen when non-physical abuse within a relationship was 'minimised or thought not to count as a form of domestic violence' (Home Office, 2012, p. 10). Society, including those who had experienced abuse, was left uncertain as to what it was that DVA actually encompassed (Home Office, 2012). Extensive governmental consultation culminated in a consensus that a new definition was required to reflect better the reality of abuse (Home Office, 2011, 2012). In response, the cross-governmental definition of DVA was amended in 2013 to embrace the breadth and pattern of controlling, coercive and threatening behaviours which it represented. It is this Governmental definition which I have, broadly, adopted as the framework for this study:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass but is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional (Home Office, 2013b).

Attention is paid to controlling behaviour which is clarified as being a variety of actions which:

Make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour (Home Office, 2013b).

This definition recognises the particular problem presented by coercive behaviour which it defines as an act or a pattern of acts (which may include assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation) which are used to harm, punish, or frighten. In addition, honour-based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation are included.

Critics suggested that the introduction of this extended Governmental definition served to highlight the deficiencies in how the Criminal Law responded to DVA. Youngs (2015) argued that the criminal law was ineffectual; it neglected conduct with the potential to cause psychological harm and the 'pattern-based nature is not acknowledged and perpetrators' intentions are ignored' (Youngs, 2015, p. 69).

The Government through public consultation sought representations as to whether a specific offence addressing coercive and controlling behaviour was needed to align with the new non-statutory definition (Home Office, 2014b). The consultation considered:

...whether reinforcing the law to capture patterns of non-violent behaviour within intimate relationships will offer better protection. We also welcome views on whether this will encourage victims to have the confidence to report their abuse, and cause perpetrators to rethink their behaviour (Home Office, 2014b, p. 11).

The majority of respondents expressed the view that the criminal law did not provide sufficient protection to those who experienced DVA (Home Office, 2014a). As a result, the Serious Crime Act came into force in December 2015 (Serious Crime Act 2015). It introduced a criminal offence of coercive and controlling behaviour against an intimate partner or family member (Serious Crime Act 2015, Section 76). Such an offence is committed when a person repeatedly or continuously engages in behaviour towards another person which is controlling or coercive at a time when they are personally connected; upon conviction, the offence carries a maximum penalty of five

years imprisonment. This legislation represents formal recognition that coercive control is the most common and most dangerous form of DA (Home Office, 2015b).

At the time of writing this thesis it is too early to predict how this new law will fit into a legal framework which seeks to tackle DVA by protecting victims and punishing perpetrators. It may, however, be suggested that application of the legislation will prove problematic. It is difficult to envisage how prosecutors and police will react to this law without extensive, specialist, ongoing training regarding the complex dynamics of DVA. In the absence of physical evidence such as an injury, broken or damaged property, they will have to make difficult and at times finely balanced decisions as to the nature of the relationship under scrutiny. Without formal statutory guidance, of which there is none, they will be left to decide whether a relationship crosses a boundary between 'normal' limitations and coercive control. It is likely that these challenging decisions will be subjective at best and inconsistent at worst. Finally, victims who by the very nature of the crime will most likely be isolated and stripped of their autonomy, will be required to identify themselves as abused and then speak out about their experiences.

2.6.4 Summary

The historical backdrop and legislative framework outlined above provides a useful setting from which DVA may be culturally understood, however, it does not adequately portray the violation of living in an abusive relationship. Despite measures aimed at dispelling the notion that DVA is a private family matter, many still view it as being 'disconnected events, taking place in the private sphere of a relationship' (World Health Organization, 2014a, p. 31). Perpetrators may project a public persona of charm and so create a conspiracy to keep the abuse hidden (Horley, 2002); they deflect from their oppressive behaviours by minimising or denying the abuse which they inflict in private (Barnish, 2004). As Horley comments:

One of the most striking aspects of the problem of woman abuse is that there seems to be a great conspiracy on the part of men and women involved, and on the part of society as a whole, to pretend that woman abuse is not really a problem at all (Horley, 2002, p. 110).

Accordingly, DVA is often perceived as being a personal problem, a view which is strengthened by community and perpetrator denial (Barnish, 2004). Women acting

through fear of retaliation and social ostracisation may be deterred from confiding in others about the behaviour they experience in private; isolated from the external experiences which might affirm their own judgements they become confused by and uncertain about the abuse they endure (Kirkwood, 1993). In this way the disparity between the public façade and private abuse reduces women's self-confidence (Lammers, Ritchie, & Robertson, 2005). To deepen insights regarding life within such a relationship the section below explores the reality of living within an abusive relationship.

2.7 Living within an abusive relationship

As highlighted above (chapter 2.6.3) the full impact of the Serious Crime Act (2015) is yet to be recorded. It remains the case that it is physical violence, as a form of abuse, is most closely associated with DVA (Crown Prosecution Service, 2016; Office for National Statistics, 2016). If a woman is physically assaulted, her partner or ex-partner is the most likely perpetrator (Dobash, Dobash, Cavanagh, & Medina-Ariza, 2007). If a woman is unlawfully killed she is most likely to have been killed by either her partner or her ex-partner (Dobash et al., 2007). In England and Wales in 2015, 97% of female homicide victims were killed by a male and 77% were killed by a present or past intimate partner (the remaining 23% were killed by a family member) (Office for National Statistics, 2016). At present it is these offences committed against the person which most frequently come to the attention of the police and therefore before the criminal courts (Crown Prosecution Service, 2013, 2016). This type of assaultive behaviour may involve use of a weapon including articles such as knives, belts, ropes and everyday household items and furniture. It may or may not cause an injury. It might take the form of but is not limited to: punching, kicking, slapping, hitting, hair pulling, biting, burning, strangling and suffocating or a combination of these acts (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014). For many women it is the underlying threat of physical or sexual abuse which causes fear, therefore, it is the possibility of such an assault which reinforces the abuser's power (Pence & Paymar, 1993; Stark, 2009). Harne and Radford elucidate thus:

...it is the physical and sexual violence or threats of these forms of violence, that serve to keep the other forms in place, because despite its pernicious nature, psychological violence and emotional cruelty take their power from threats and realities of physical and sexual violence which contextualise it (Harne & Radford, 2008, p. 6).

DVA may thus be regarded as a pattern of interwoven behaviours. The women who took part in this study spoke of a range of abuse; power was maintained and bolstered via this complex web through which the women were subjugated (see chapter six).

Sexual assault, as a form of violence, may involve acts or attempted acts such as unwanted touching, forced or non-consensual penetration. It includes behaviour where the victim ostensibly 'consents' but only does so through fear of violence or retaliation (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014). This is of relevance in the realm of DVA, where those who experience abuse may feel compelled to comply with the perpetrators sexual demands, knowing that a refusal is likely to bring about certain repercussions and trigger unwanted behaviours. It is argued that women are often reluctant to report these types of sexual behaviours which by nature are intimate and involve a degree of violation (Kelly & Radford, 1990). Further, the discourse and the terminology which surrounds sexual assault can present a barrier to some women disclosing (Bagwell-Gray, Messing, & Baldwin-White, 2015). As highlighted earlier within this review marital rape was not recognised as a criminal offence until the 1990's (see chapter 2.6.2). It has been argued that a legacy of this overdue formal recognition may have contributed to the difficulty some women experience in conceptualising sexual assault within a relationship as being abusive or consider it a criminal offence (Bagwell-Gray et al., 2015). According to Walby and Allen women are less likely to describe an act that meets the legal definition of rape as being rape if the perpetrator was an intimate or former intimate partner (Walby & Allen, 2004). So that women search for an alternative discourse to frame their experiences such as 'sexual assault or abuse' and 'forced sex' (Walby & Allen, 2004, p. 65). These findings tend to suggest that legislature plays a key role in defining cultural understandings of DVA, which may permeate the victim and offender. As will be seen this linguistic tussle experienced by some women regarding sexual abuse became apparent during my study and this is revisited later (see chapter eight) in the context of data analysis and discussion.

Current understandings of DVA demand that DVA must be regarded as incorporating a range of abusive behaviours, perpetrated over time and occurring within a pattern of acts which are coercive and controlling in nature (Stark, 2007). It is argued that the physical abuse of women in the absence of psychological abuse is virtually non-existent: psychological abuse generally precedes physical abuse both during the course of the relationship and in the escalation of particular incidents (Barnish, 2004). So that whilst physical violence in all its manifestations has historically been

equated with DVA this form of abuse has 'lost its centrality relative to other means of subordinating women in personal life' (Stark, 2009, p. 1513). Violence has thus been succeeded by what is arguably a more pernicious form of abuse, namely coercive and controlling behaviours. Scholars have suggested that previous research into this type of abuse has been problematic, hindered by a lack of agreement as to how it should be defined and measured (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014; Lammers et al., 2005; Youngs, 2015). Such claims have lost their potency, in England and Wales at least, following the introduction of the cross governmental definition of DVA discussed above (Home Office, 2013b). This development in understandings of DVA from the episodic: incident specific, mainly violent acts to a range of chronic behaviours has transformed understandings and called for new approaches. It emphasises the need for policy surrounding DVA to be wide ranging and flexible.

Coercive and controlling behaviour is typically underpinned by threats or violence which serve to acquire or maintain power (Stark, 2007, 2009). It represents 'repetitive overt or subtle acts and messages that control or attempt to control, which negatively affect the abused partner's emotions or self-value in the long term. [It has] at its core the misuse of power' (Lammers et al., 2005, p. 31). Such behaviour oppresses any attempts to resist which may then lead to an increase of abuse (Stark, 2007). Kirkwood usefully frames this type of abuse in terms of 'a web' which interweaves to maintain power:

This imaginary [web] conveys that emotional abuse, as a whole, is a network of interrelated behaviours and emotions. This network is extremely difficult to discern when the women are caught within it. The concept of a web also conveys the overriding sense arising from the women's descriptions that they were trapped and held in a relationship that threatened to destroy their emotional and physical safety (Kirkwood, 1993, p. 58).

Such mistreatment individually and cumulatively serves to limit women's autonomy (Harne & Radford, 2008). It might include isolating a woman from her friends and family, restricting her contact with other people outside the home by, for example, not allowing her to leave home without the abuser being present. A woman's sleep pattern might be disturbed or restricted, or her use of a bathroom might be restricted or controlled. A woman may not be allowed to work or, alternatively, the nature and pattern of her work life may be regulated. In this and many other ways a woman may be monitored at home and at work, further monitoring might occur through

communications which extend outside the home such emails and telephone calls. The home finances may be scrutinised so that the woman may only have limited access to or be denied access to money (including her own money). The woman might be made to account for any money she spends and produce receipts to prove what was purchased and where it was purchased. Perpetrators may further seek to control areas and spaces within the home by having 'rules about space in the house, if there is a spare room he will commandeer it for his study, in which he cannot be disturbed. His possessions must not be moved or touched by anyone' (Horley, 2002, p. 20). Recent research suggests that 98% of the respondents who experienced DV had been subject to controlling, domineering and demeaning behaviours (Domestic Violence Law Reform Campaign, 2014). Such behaviours included:

Isolation from friends, family and colleagues; removal of all communications devices; food being withheld as well as use of the toilet; control of what the victim would wear, how they would style their hair and where they could work, if they were allowed to at all; financial control including restricting the victim from using any money or having any control over bills; deliberate sleep deprivation; threats of sexual abuse or rape; threats to harm or kill children and/or pets; threats of physical harm such as broken bones or strangulation (Domestic Violence Law Reform Campaign, 2014, p. 5).

It is the insidious and imprecise nature of this type of abuse which makes it hard to comprehend. It requires an evaluation of the indefinite, and at times subjective line between behaviours apparent in healthy relationships and those which may be considered abusive. Arguably it is the exploitation of a power imbalance as between the perpetrator and victim which indicates the latter. This tension between a linear relationship and one which is unhealthy is problematic for the objective bystander and the victim alike as they try to negotiate and understand how and in what way this invisible boundary has been crossed.

It is now widely accepted that the long-term effects of this type of non-physical abuse may be equally, if not more devastating, than those which relate to physical violence (James & MacKinnon, 2010; Nevala, 2017; Velonis, 2016; Williamson, 2010; World Health Organization, 2014a). It is especially pernicious; beyond physical injuries in that it can lead to mental health issues including sleeping/eating disorders, anxiety,

depression, stress and loss of self-esteem and self-worth (Barnish, 2004; Baty et al., 2008; Matheson et al., 2015).

It may be argued that notwithstanding the physical and emotional toll of DVA the women who experience such abuse are not passive as they strive to manage and resist the abuse they may sustain (Hayes, 2013a). Juxtaposed to any stereotypical narrative which may inaccurately portray the women as succumbing to abuse, it is argued that women often demonstrate a resilience to the oppressive and abusive regimes they endure (Hayes, 2013a). Women in abusive relationships may construct either literal or metaphoric 'safety zones' where they retain a sense of self (Stark, 2007). They learn to recognise some of the triggers for their partner's abusive behaviour and dependent on resources available to them they may adopt covert and resistant strategies in an

Finally, to say something of separation, according to Harne and Radford '[o]ne of the main myths about domestic violence is that it is easy for women to leave' (Harne & Radford, 2008, p. 46). DVA often elicits questions as to why women remain in abusive relationships. It is sensitive debate, which inadvertently reveals something of the misnomers which surround DVA. The focus to act is placed on the victim whom it presupposes has autonomy. Leaving an abusive relationship is complex, in that it is an act of personal strength but also heralds social change: a relationship which may be externally viewed as healthy is exposed as abusive.

Typically leaving a relationship brings about closure but this is often not the case for a woman who exits an abusive relationship: separation often does not bring about any cessation of abuse (Stark, 2007). For those women who have endured abuse leaving can be a 'long and difficult journey' (Keeling, Smith, & Fisher, 2016, p. 6). It is a course which may bring about a change in or an escalation of abuse (Kirkwood, 1993; Walby & Allen, 2004). This may particularly be the case post separation where there is ongoing contact through children (Kirkwood, 1993); an abusive ex-partner may use various tactics open to them to maintain power and control long after a split with children often utilised as pawns to exert ongoing authority (Toews & Bermea, 2015).

As opposed to separation bringing any sort of a conclusion to the physical risk separated women are more likely than any other category of women to be subjected to an assault (Rezay, 2017). It is well documented that women and their children are most often 'killed in the context of ongoing violence against them by the perpetrator and/or when they attempt to leave the relationship' (Dobash et al., 2007, p. 201). Elizabeth contends that such post separation assaultive behaviour:

...may entail the escalation or a diversification of the ways in which he abuses her. 'Separation attacks' are often located in previously untapped arenas, and may involve other people as key players who become agents of her ongoing abuse and victimization (Elizabeth, 2013, p. 71).

In terms of psychological abuse any sort of separation cannot be seen as an end to the emotional disruption a woman will endure (Elizabeth, 2013). Separated women may experience an inner turmoil: nightmares or flashbacks they may live with a sense of vulnerability brought about by the past abuse they have endured. Thus post separation, the impact of the long-term emotional and physical abuse cannot 'be shaken off instantaneously and, in a number of ways, continues to haunt and resurface' (Kirkwood, 1993, p. 114).

In the section above, I have explored the nature of DVA. Below I examine the theories which have sought to explain this phenomenon. There is no one single theory which explains DVA. I provide a synopsis of some of the principal theories with the caveat that they are all considered flawed and contested. The section concludes with an examination of the ecological model which has been adopted by this study as a framework. The model acknowledged DVA as a complex, multifaceted phenomenon which may only be understood as a synergy of existing theories.

2.8 Theoretical explanations of domestic violence and abuse

Acknowledging that research into DVA might confer a better understanding and strategies for intervention (Flood, 2011; Hearn, 1996; Wangmann, 2011), theorists from across the disciplines have explored this phenomenon (Fawcett, Featherstone, Hearn, & Toft, 1996, p. 97; Finkelhor, 1983; Hague & Malos, 2005; Harris-Short & Miles, 2007; Walsh et al., 2015). Below, I provide a synopsis of the principal theories which have sought to explain DVA.

2.8.1 Individual theories

Individual theories take the individual as the unit of study. It encompasses biological explanations which focus on physicality and biochemistry (Anderson, 2005) and the 'evolutionary psychology' model whereby perpetrators are deemed to have traits which predispose them to DVA such as anger and mental disorder (Cunradi, Caetano, & Schafer, 2002a; Eckhardt, Parrott, & Sprunger, 2015; Hilton & Harris, 2005;

Holtzworth-Munroe, Bates, Smutzler, & Sandin, 1997; Stuart et al., 2006). Critics of individual theories argue that many of the characteristics relied upon are semi-social as opposed to natural (Hearn, 1998). Feminist scholars reject individual explanations as being potentially exonerative in that they serve to absolve the abusers from blame (Dutton & Nicholls, 2005; George & Stith, 2014).

2.8.2 Interpersonal explanations

Systems theorists claim that violence between intimates is an expression of conflict within the family unit (Gelles, 1983; Gelles & Straus, 1979; Giles-Sims & Straus, 1983). They fore front conflict and resolution (Gelles & Straus, 1979). It is argued that a such a theory does not address the nature, frequency and context of abuse (Sillito, 2010): it disregards the proposition that women may retaliate or be provoked into using violence (Miller & Meloy, 2006; Mullender, 2002). Gender is side lined (Archer, 2006; Gelles, 1980; Mirrlees-Black & Byron, 1999) so that feminist scholars take issue that gendered power and control are not confronted within the research process (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2013; Hunnicutt, 2009; Kimmel, 2008).

2.8.3 Structural theories

Structural theorists view DVA as being the product of social and structural variables such as unemployment and debt, or borne of cultural norms such as sexism and patriarchy. In this way, the issues are located beyond individuals or the family. Below I examine two of the major structural theories: socio-structural and feminist.

2.8.3.1 Socio-structural

Through this lens DVA is not viewed as distinct from other forms of violence (Roberts, Hegarty, & Feder, 2006). It is characteristic of, but not exclusive to, certain groups of the population (Morley & Mullender, 1994), linked to factors such as poverty, unemployment and poor working conditions (Conner, 2014; Cunradi, Caetano, & Schafer, 2002b; Gelles, 1980; Hegarty, Gunn, Chondros, & Taft, 2008; Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1981). Whilst the theory acknowledges that the dynamics of abuse are multifaceted (Begum, Donta, Nair, & Prakasam, 2015; Renzetti, Lynch, & DeWall, 2015), it pertains that anger and frustration lead to violence within the home (Birkley & Eckhardt, 2015). Critics aver that the theory unifies social and cultural groups regarding them as a monolithic entity (Dustin & Phillips, 2008). It overlooks how

women from deprived social/economic backgrounds may be over represented in research because they are known to agencies (Mirrlees-Black & Byron, 1999; Morley & Mullender, 1994). Further, it neglects research which suggests that DVA occurs regardless of social positioning (Dobash & Dobash, 2003; Hague & Malos, 2005), perpetuating the notion that DVA only occurs in low income families (Stark & Flitcraft, 1996).

2.8.3.2 Feminist theory

Across its diverse frameworks feminist theory has explored the dynamics of DVA (Harne & Radford, 2008). Whilst there is no one single feminist lens (Tong, 2013) this section brings together some of the tenets of feminist thought as they interact with DVA theory.

Feminists contend that DVA must be viewed through a framework which takes account of gender (Yllo, 1993): it is social control linked to a patriarchal tradition (Hague & Malos, 2005; Johnson, 2011; Renzetti, 1997; Roberts et al., 2006; Tong, 1998; Yllo, 1993). Whilst it is conceded that some women may use violence, it is argued that such abuse has unequal outcomes and women perpetrators have different motivations from men such as self-defence or provocation (Dobash & Dobash, 2003; Hester, 2009; Kimmel, 2008). Feminists do not reject the relevance of external stressors as such, however, they refute that these features can explain DVA (Hague & Malos, 2005; Hoff, 1988; Stark & Flitcraft, 1996). Sitting within this field of study is the work of Michael Johnson he contends that multiple types of intimate personal violence exist (Johnson, 1995). His approach distinguishes between 'intimate terrorism' a desire by men to control women and 'situational couple violence' conflict which escalates into violence (Johnson, 1995, 2011; Johnson et al., 2014; Kelly & Johnson, 2008).

It is argued that the feminist lens neglects the diversity of abused women's experiences (Taft, Bryant-Davis, Woodward, Tillman, & Torres, 2009) and relegates DVA committed by women (Dutton & Nicholls, 2005). It advances an essentialist notion of male domination which fails to explain why some men are abusive towards their partners (Dutton, 2011; Liddle, 1989). For others the emphasis on patriarchy lets men 'off the hook' rendering them unaccountable for the rights they obtain by being men (George & Stith, 2014, p. 3).

2.8.4 The ecological model

The ecological model, has been adopted by the World Health Organization as a means of understanding violence and DVA in particular (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2006; World Health Organization, 2010). It acknowledges DVA as a multifaceted phenomenon which can be understood as a synergy of existing theories (Heise, 1998). It positions DVA as being the consequence of the interplay between characteristics which operate at four levels - the individual, relationships, community and societal (Dutton, 2011; Kelmendi, 2015; Krug, Mercy, Dahlberg, & Zwi, 2002; World Health Organization, 1996, 2014b). The framework identifies and categorises features which recur in incidents of DVA. The model has been criticised as it fails to differentiate between preventing violent behaviour and preventing violent victimisation, nor does it distinguish amongst types of violence and abuse (Leander, 2002).

It is suggested that individual attributes such as personality and developmental history may influence a perpetrators use of DVA (Heise, 1998). Characteristics such as a childhood history of abuse/witnessing DVA, a psychological disorder, young age, low educational attainment and substance abuse including alcohol have been cited as relevant (Heise, 1998; Kelmendi, 2015; Mirrlees-Black & Byron, 1999; World Health Organization, 2010). At the next level the model includes relational influences such as peer and family relationships: economic dependency, jealousy, and gender inequality have all been cited as risk indicators (Kelmendi, 2015). Community level factors relate to relationships formed and maintained in an environmental context including workplaces, religious foundations and schools (World Health Organization, 2010). It reflects the characteristics of communities and how they may protect against or contribute to DVA, so that factors such as an acceptance of violence and low community sanctions have all been linked to an increased risk of DVA (World Health Organization, 2010). Finally, at the societal level underlying influences are cited: Patriarchal norms reflect 'inequities at a societal level [which] legitimize intimate partner violence' (World Health Organization, 2010, p. 26).

I considered the ecological model as being most suited to my theoretical objectives being under-pinned by an understanding which identifies structures of social relations, it encompasses the notion that DVA is borne of the relationship between people and the world they encounter. It may be argued that this model promotes a meaning that DVA is a complex and nebulous phenomenon which takes account of the sphere in which it operates. This broadly aligns with my ontological stance that DVA must be ascribed a transience of meanings which are fluid and shift through time and place.

Chapter Three: Literature review

Part Two - Men, Sport and Negative Attitudes Towards Women

3.1 Introduction

Sporting activities have a range of benefits, both direct and indirect, transcending the individual, cutting across communities and society (Williams & Neville, 2014). Sport, at every level, is embedded within society as Kidd avers:

Most of us grew up playing sports, dreaming about starring in them and making lifelong friends through them. Many of us still play sports as adults, and we follow them endlessly, admiring and analysing the performances of our favourites...discussing them...scheduling our lives around the calendar of the major sports events. Some of us actively encourage our children in sports, driving them to the rink or park, helping with coaching and officiating (Kidd, 2013, p. 553).

Paradoxically, it is suggested that some sports are also associated with ‘a powerful set of ideological values that can serve to perpetuate some of society’s problems, including domestic violence’ (Williams & Neville, 2014, p. 3). Whilst sport as an institution undoubtedly has many advantages it may also be associated with negative attributes some of which form the basis of this chapter. The chapter opens with a *précis* of the relationship between combat sport (mainly models of football) and violence. This is followed by a synopsis of the history of organized sport. The chapter moves on to provide a detailed, critical examination concerning men, sport and negative attitudes towards women including DVA.

3.2 Team combat sport and violence

This thesis takes DVA as its focus as opposed to violence *per se*, nonetheless, it is argued that no examination of combat sport is complete without considering its complex and inevitable connection with violence (Guilbert, 2004; Jewell et al., 2012). Violence may be considered a nebulous and contested concept: the difficulty of definition is compounded when placed in the context of sporting activities (Young, 2012). The World Health Organization has adopted the following definition of violence:

The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal development or deprivation (World Health Organization, 1996, p. 4).

I would suggest that this framework, whilst useful, does have shortcomings when positioned in the context of combat sport. Arguably, it omits threatened violence where there is no likelihood of harm, it thus excludes verbal abuse on the pitch between athletes or the misogynist and abusive language that may be adopted by a coach to motivate a player (e.g.Pappas, 2004). Sport sociologists have advocated a more nuanced definition of aggression as the ‘verbal or physical actions grounded in an intent to dominate, control or do harm to another’ and violence ‘ as the use of excessive physical force which causes or has the potential to cause harm or destruction’ (Coakley & Donnelly, 2009, p. 197). When placed in the context of combat sport this arguably better reflects the complex relationship between those involved in the sport as they try to exert power over their team opponents.

The association between sport and violence is well established and has been the subject of a plethora of research across the disciplines (Young, 2012). It is argued that player violence, in combat sport, both within and outside the rules is accepted as being part of the game and thus ‘ritualistic or harmless’ (Young, 2012, p. 18). Scholars have argued that some sports serve to condone violent behaviour, which would be denounced in any other social situation (Coakley, 1988; Young, 2012). In the section below, I trace the history of modern organized sport before going on to explore the relationship between sport and masculinities.

3.3 A brief history of organized sport

Many modern day sports such as English rugby and cricket find their roots in the folk games of the late middle ages (Dunning, 1986). Through the passage of time these traditional games were appropriated and modified by the ruling classes (Kidd, 2013; Messner, 1995). Sport developed ‘under the specific social conditions of rapidly industrializing nineteenth-century Britain and spread to the rest of the world through emigration, emulation and imperialism’ (Kidd, 2013, p. 554). As life for many became more civilised there was a shift in power towards women and men responded to this apparent threat with the institution of combat sports such as rugby (Dunning, 1986). With the growth of the British Empire in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries came

the development of the modern-day sports such as rugby union and football (Williams & Neville, 2014). Initially such sports were perceived as an exclusive activity: dominated by men of the middle and upper classes they were the reserve of public schools, private clubs and universities (Kidd, 2013). Organized sport prepared young men for careers in the government and military by ‘instilling physical and mental toughness, obedience to authority and loyalty to the team’ (Kidd, 2013, p. 555). In this way these team sports played a fundamental role in maintaining the ruling class domination over the masses and it was not until the turn of the century that, as a means of regulating leisure time, it was opened up to the lower classes (Messner, 1995). A move which represented ‘a cultural means of integrating immigrants and a growing industrial working class into an expanding capitalist order where work was becoming rationalized and leisure time was expanding’ (Messner, 1988, p. 199). Organised, combat sport emerged as a cultural arena for contested social meanings which included race, class and gender (Messner, 1995). The rapid expansion in organized sport created separate spheres for men and women, arguably creating a new setting for the cultivation male of privilege (Messner, 1988).

3.4 Team combat sport, masculinities and hegemonic masculinities

A wealth of mainly feminist-led literature has built upon the history of sport by considering the association between some sporting activities and masculinities. Men and masculinities should both be understood as ‘*socially constructed, produced, and reproduced* rather than as somehow just naturally one way or another; as *variable and changing* across time (history) and space (culture) within societies and through life courses...’ (Hearn, 2015, p. 9). It is argued that as organized sport grew an ideology evolved which ‘professed inherent connections between sport, morality, and manliness’ (Crosset, 1990, p. 45). It was perceived as an activity which involved attributes such as strength, power and endurance which reinforced the notions of male valour (Williams et al., 2013). According to Messner it was through the institution of team sport that masculinities were reproduced via the education and socialisation of males (Messner, 1995).

After the second world war women became more visible outside the home, combined with growing prominence in education and the work place there ensued a ‘crisis of masculinity’ (Messner, 1995). Combat sport, such as football and rugby union, responded to this threat by becoming an important domain for the retention of male dominance and the production of masculinity following ‘...a decline in the social currency attached to other ways of demonstrating physical prowess’ (Whitson, 1990,

p. 19). Men's preoccupation with sport grew as other more traditional sites for the expression of male identity eroded (Messner, 1988, 1995). Organized sport became a site of ideological contest for gender relations, positioned as a gendered institution where the subordination of women was confirmed (Bryson, 1990; Melnick, 1992; Messner, 1992). It is argued that the emergent organized sports acted as a domain where men could exert and maintain their dominance as a link to their patriarchal past (Messner, 1988); hence it is 'difficult to discuss masculinity without noting men's use of sport to construct and maintain masculine identities' (Crosset, 2000, p. 148).

The analysis of gendered social processes within patriarchy has been framed, in part, by Connell who fore-fronted the concept of hegemonic masculinities (Connell, 1987). Hegemonic masculinity, it is argued, serves to subordinate women and marginalise men who deviate from the social norms of masculinity: men comply in order for the system of patriarchy to continue with all its advantages to both men as a group and also as individuals (Kahn, 2009). Connell's configuration of male hegemony shaped the mainly feminist-led research which explored masculinity in the context of sport through the 1980's and into the 1990's (Anderson & McGuire, 2010; Cleland, 2016). Adopting such a concept early sport sociologist Lois Bryson theorized that sport was a 'crucial arena in which masculine hegemony is constructed and reconstructed' (Bryson, 1987, p. 1). Sport, she argued, operates as a powerful institution which promoted male solidarity through negative attitudes towards women and also others who were unable to aspire to the superiority of the hegemonic male (Bryson, 1987). In relation to football, particularly:

...boys learn what is to be a man, it is replete with masculinising meanings and practices, which have a powerful role in the production and reproduction of male hegemony...football is used as a medium in one of the arenas in which gender identities are constructed, negotiated and performed (Swain, 2000, p. 96).

According to Whitson, in Western culture sport sanctions and celebrates male prowess through displays of strength and fighting skills. It confirms male solidarity, especially amongst dominant males, to reinforce hegemony (Whitson, 1990). Sport may act as the expression and reproduction of hegemonic forms of masculinity 'where violence, pain and injury are legitimate and indeed make sense' (Young, 2012, p. 103).

Despite the wealth of feminist led rhetoric the term hegemonic masculinity remains contested (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Hearn, 2015). Connell has conceded that

the concept of hegemony has mutated over time so that some of its more positive features have been lost (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). In the context of sport it is suggested that the application of the model can be simplistic it serves to emphasise the negative aspects of sporting culture (McKay, Messner, & Sabo, 2000). According to Palmer, sporting academics have demonstrated an over reliance on such a construct, so that within the sociology of sport women have been neglected as a unit of study (Palmer, 2014b). Its overuse has led to selective accounts and diminished lines of inquiry, so that in the sporting context at least:

[Connell's] hegemony theory of masculinity has served as the most prolific paradigm to analyze the relationship between men and sport (we maintain that it had particular heuristic utility from the mid-1980s through to the mid-1990s), we nonetheless find it theoretically and heuristically limiting in today's culture...(Anderson & McGuire, 2010, p. 252).

Academics argue that despite encouraging signs of change, sport particularly football, remains dominated by masculine values (Cleland, 2016; Light & Wedgwood, 2012). Connell opines that it is 'rather depressing' (Connell, 2012, p. 1) that in the twenty first century:

Sport, particularly team combat sport, has become over the last century a central feature of the imagery of masculinity, and an important mechanism of gender hegemony in rich countries...there are widespread assumptions [in sport] ...that (a) males and females should be segregated, (b) chicks are not as good as dudes, and if they are, they should not be, (c) it is men's sport that really matters, (d) obviously, blokes should run sport. These are the default settings (Connell, 2012, p. 1).

3.5 Male athletes and negative attitudes towards women

There has been a great deal of media attention, particularly in the United States, regarding the interplay between male athletes and abuse towards women in their private lives (Murnen & Kohlman, 2007; Pappas, 2004; Webb, 2011). It is argued that this interest is borne of media speculation, which suggests a 'problem with partner abuse amongst male athletes, and the list of known athletes in trouble for assaulting their female partners is depressingly long, but media reportage is hardly scientific fact...(Young, 2012, p. 80). Scholars across the disciplines have taken the association

between athletic participation and negative attitudes towards women as their focus (Young, 2012). Research in this field was notably most prevalent in the 1990's (McCray, 2014), leading sports sociologist Ted Crosset to comment that 'no social issue in sport has revived more media attention in the 1990's than male athletes' violence against women' (Crosset, 1999, p. 244). This body of research, which has been dominated by the investigation into sexual aggression (McCray, 2014), has largely taken the attitudes of male athletic students as its focus (Palmer, 2011b). It has been conducted primarily outside the United Kingdom where inter collegiate sports and fraternities are common. Whilst this study is not concerned with the athlete, in the section below I bring together and present a summary of some of the pertinent literature within this field.

Early research in this field, which was conducted in the United States, concluded that male students who played sport at college level, were over five times more likely to admit sexual intercourse which could be defined as rape (Melnick, 1992); leading Melnick to theorize that such behaviour must be viewed as part of 'a larger pattern of behaviour with roots firmly planted in the very structure and culture of sport' (Melnick, 1992, p. 1). Later studies identified a correlation between male fraternity membership, sporting affiliation and sexual assault aggression (Brown, Sumner, & Nocera, 2002; Frintner & Robinson, 1993). Other American researchers surveyed over 500 male students, including 140 student-athletes, of which over 15% participated in revenue-producing sports such as football and basketball. The students self-reported behaviour which included unwanted sexual contact and coercion. The researchers concluded that male students who participated in 'athletics' had a higher prediction of sexual aggression. It is important, however, to put these findings in context and note that they cautioned that other factors such as alcohol consumption and nicotine use recorded a higher correlation (Koss & Gaines, 1993). Later, Crosset and his colleagues noted that male athlete students were over reported as being perpetrators when they examined women's complaints of sexual assaults in the context of formal judicial proceedings on campus (Crosset, Ptacek, McDonald, & Benedict, 1996). More nuanced approaches have suggested that university residences combined with sporting activities (Murnen & Kohlman, 2007) or fraternity combined with athletic team allegiance (Humphrey & Kahn, 2000) may produce violence-supportive norms which include violence against women. It has been further argued that the nature of the sporting activity itself may be significant and local and contextual factors may be influential (Flood & Dyson, 2007). Male athletes who participate in team and sports-centred activities, such as football, have demonstrated increased hyper-masculinity/sexual aggression and negative attitudes towards

women compared with men who compete in individual sports such as track and field (Gage, 2008; Sawyer, Thompson, & Chicorelli, 2002). Suggesting that it is the underlying, inherent framework of organised/combat sport that puts women at risk of DVA. Findings have not, however, always been consistent (Sawyer et al., 2002; Smith & Stewart, 2003), as Flood and Dyson aver:

...there are features of some sporting sub-cultures which may make them particularly dangerous for women. To the extent that some sporting sub-cultures (especially those associated with team-based contact sports) involve more sexist and conservative norms for gender and sexuality, they may also involve more violence-supportive attitudes (Flood & Dyson, 2007, p. 40).

Scholars calling for further research (Young, 2012) have been keen to caution that investigations have been complicated by methodological and sampling issues and the measurement of features such as 'the environment and culture created by and reciprocally influencing athletes and fraternity members' (Koss & Gaines, 1993, p. 1). McCray highlights the inherent difficulty of such research when she posits 'are more aggressive, rape-supportive men joining sports teams because they are naturally aggressive, or do sports actually make...athletes more aggressive?' (McCray, 2014, p. 3).

The nexus is undoubtedly complex leading 'domestic violence experts, sports sociologists, and even former players [to speculate] why athletes may be more likely to commit acts of domestic abuse' (Webb, 2011, p. 759). Several features of sporting cultures have been identified as contributing to this interplay; it is argued that multifaceted social and cultural structures combine to form athletes' negative attitudes towards women (Brown et al., 2002; Koss & Gaines, 1993). Academics observe that sporting practices and team building often include aspects of homophobia, masculinity, and misogyny (Flood & Dyson, 2007; Muir & Seitz, 2004; Schacht, 1996). Players are socialised through a culture where the demeaning of women serves to unite men as they objectify women and adopt 'male bravado in a peer [sporting] culture which is carried off...to their relationships with women' (Pappas, 2004, p. 309). Others take the aggressive discourse adopted by athlete and coach as their focus speculating that such a narrative which often includes war, gender and sexuality confirms team bonding and accentuates the exclusion of others (Adams, Anderson, & McCormack, 2010; Steinfeldt, Foltz, et al., 2011; Steinfeldt, Vaughn,

Rutkowski, & Steinfeldt, 2011). A discourse is adopted which condemns those who deviate from the notion that sports are 'designed to harden males' (Kidd, 2013, p. 561). This narrative follows the players off the pitch and into the locker room (Curry, 1991):

Sexist locker room talk is likely to have a cumulative negative effect on young men because it reinforces the notions of masculine privilege and hegemony, making that world view seem normal and typical. Moreover, it does so in a particularly pernicious fashion (Curry, 1991, p. 134).

Despite the academic speculation, understandings remain limited as theory cannot easily address whether males with negative attitudes are drawn to sport, or whether sport perpetuates and nurtures such attitudes. As Muir and Seitz query is it 'birds of a feather flocking together, or birds joining the flock and changing their feathers' (Muir & Seitz, 2004, p. 323). Against such a background critics argue that research can only be taken to suggest that athlete participation, in association with other predictors, may indicate an increased risk of sexual violence towards women (Crosset, 1999). Whilst the literature regarding athlete's attitudes towards women has progressed from early generalisations (Flood & Dyson, 2007); scholars continue to call for further research to develop our understandings (McCray, 2014; Palmer, 2011b).

3.6 Team combat sport (mainly football) and DVA

This study is not concerned with the athlete and maybe be viewed as being broadly located within that body of research which examines the sports spectator. The sports spectator has been the subject of a mass of inter disciplinary scholarly attention, however, the bulk of research and theory has tended to centre around the cause and nature of spectator violence erupting in and around the sporting venues (Young, 2012). In the section which follows I trace the scholarly research which has explored the association between sport (mainly National Football League - NFL) and DVA. This research has mostly emanated from the United States where interest has been fuelled by the popular discourse which suggests an association between the NFL 'Super Bowl Sunday' and DVA (Adubato, 2016; Williams & Neville, 2014). Early research carried out in Northern Virginia investigated women's trauma related hospital admissions and local NFL team games (White et al., 1992). Accounting for variables which included day and month, researchers identified that women's emergency admissions for 'assaultive acts' increased around the time of NFL games. The increase was,

however, limited to when the local team won. The authors were left to speculate that the assaults related to DVA. They concluded that:

The results indicate that the frequency of admissions of women victims of gun shots, stabbings, assaults, falls, lacerations and being struck by objects increases when the team wins. We hypothesize that many of these injuries are the result of battering and that having a favorite team win may act as a trigger for assault in some males. We suggest that viewing the successful use of violent acts may give the identifying fan a sense of license to dominate his surroundings (White et al., 1992, p. 157).

Later research concerning the association between NFL and DV again suggested a positive association (Sachs & Chu, 2000). The researchers monitored DA dispatches made by the Los Angeles Sheriff Department over two professional football seasons which included the Super Bowl. Taking a control week when no football was played, they compared the difference between Wednesdays, when no local professional football teams played, and Sundays when they did (Sachs & Chu, 2000). They reported an average increase of 68% in DV call outs on Sundays when football was played as compared with non-football Sundays. The second football season, however, recorded no percentage increase above the baseline between Wednesdays and Sundays. The authors speculated that the disparity might be due to diminishing interest in the sport following a move by two local football teams to other cities.

The research has its limitations in that it was time-specific so that delayed calls made in the hours after the matches were played, which rolled in to Monday and beyond, were not considered. This exclusion eliminated the potential for delayed reporting and highlighted the importance of timing (Williams & Neville, 2014), placing emphasis on the effect time of day and weekday plays in such estimates (Vazquez, Stohr, & Purkiss, 2005). The researchers noted that they only captured those incidences of DV which were reported and as such their results 'may not reflect the true association between timing of professional football and all incidences of DV' (Sachs & Chu, 2000, p. 11). This study and that conducted by White, Katz, and Scarborough can be critiqued for their limited data sets (Williams & Neville, 2014). In addition, both investigations were limited to a consideration of the timing of the games and the linkage of their outcomes to the number of domestic violence arrests and so reveal nothing of the nature of the abuse: the gender of and the relationship between the parties, whether or not the reported abuse was linked or in what way it was linked to the sporting event

under scrutiny. The studies do not interrogate whether illicit drugs or alcohol were a feature in what occurred, finally, we learn nothing of the abuser, if they are a sports fan or watched the game which was under investigation. Finally, we are left knowing nothing of those who were abused nor the circumstances in which the abuse occurred.

Later North American research similarly relied on police dispatches, it was conducted across 15 cities and covering 1,155 professional football games, it identified a small yet systematic relationship between DV reporting and football (Gantz, Wang, & Bradley, 2006). The researchers sought to emphasise the complex and nonlinear relationship between sport and DV when they suggested that the more significant the game in terms of league placement the more likely an occurrence of DV (Gantz, Wang, & Bradley, 2006). The research above presents a complex and uncertain picture, the need for ongoing research was emphasised by Australian scholars, who taking into account holidays and significant cultural events did not find any correlation between football matches and DV reporting (Braaf & Gilbert, 2007). The researchers took as their focus football teams which did not attract either national or a significant regional following. The authors suggested that a possible lack of team loyalty may have accounted for this disparity.

Extending their data set and allowing for team allegiance, Card and Dahl carried out the most wide scale research in this area of study in the United States (Card & Dahl, 2011). Over a twelve-year period, they analysed data from over 750 city and county police agencies regarding games played on a Sunday by 6 NFL teams. The researchers took as their focus NFL teams which had a strong local attachment. They selected Sunday games where viewing was increased and chose games where there was a strong betting market. They found that game outcome was significant to DV reporting, they recorded a 10% increase in DV incidents when a home team unexpectedly lost, however, upset wins did not result in such an increase and games where a loss was expected did not have significant effects. According to Williams and Neville this study 'provides the most reliable findings that confirms match outcome is important' (Williams & Neville, 2014, p. 7).

Scholars have been keen to emphasise that this area of research may be affected by a number of variables of which game outcome, expected or not, is just one. All the research above which was conducted outside the United Kingdom may be critiqued on the basis that it did not reveal any personal information regarding the offenders, the nature of the abuse nor did it disclose the victims' relationship with the offender.

There is a paucity of scholarly research within the United Kingdom which has investigated the nexus between team combat sport and DVA (Kirby et al., 2014;

Palmer, 2011b; Young, 2012). The bulk of existing research has concerned football, a sport which traditionally attracts large viewing audiences at home and abroad. The literature is almost exclusively quantitative in nature and reliant on police data (Kirby et al., 2014). Some benefits may accrue from such a course: DVA reporting is separately collated and monitored by the police and is not reliant upon a prosecution. There are a number of limitations to police data gathered in this way as highlighted earlier in this review (see chapter 2.4): there is gross under reporting of DVA incidences to the police (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014; Walby & Allen, 2004); past research has been hampered by inconsistent policing, shifting definitions and misconceptions regarding DVA policy (Dar, 2013).

It has been argued that football related violence including DVA presents as a particular concern in Scotland (Crowley et al., 2014; Joint Action Group, 2011). Researchers have paid particular attention to matches where rival Glasgow teams Rangers and Celtic (often referred to as the 'Old Firm') have played against each other (Crowley et al., 2014; Williams et al., 2013). In 2011, an examination of data collated by the Domestic Abuse Unit, on behalf of the Glasgow Procurator Fiscal Office, revealed a 33% increase in DA reporting when the Old Firm teams drew and a 75% increase when Old Firm played and Celtic won (Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, 2011). The data set was small, nonetheless, the findings have been broadly replicated by two further studies which took Scottish football as their focal point. Over a four-year period (2008-2011) Williams and his colleagues compared Old Firm matches with Scottish International football matches played in Glasgow (Williams et al., 2013). Using police data, they considered DV reporting in the 24 hours after a match had been played with a comparator seven-day period when no football was played. They recorded a significant increase in DA reporting to the police in the twenty-four hours after an Old Firm derby match which was not replicated after a Scottish International football match had been played in the City. The authors accounted for this disparity by suggesting that the day of the week may have been significant in that many of the international matches were weekday compared to the derby matches at the weekend. They further suggested that the nature of the matches might account for the difference in that several the international matches were friendly matches an element missing from the highly competitive Old Firm fixtures. This study highlights the difficulties encountered in this area of research and raises questions regarding the association between DVA and football. It emphasises how factors such as the nature of a particular team's allegiance might impact on DVA reporting. The study accentuates the need for ongoing research, as the authors commented:

Though our analysis precludes identification of the mechanism of this relationship, we do suggest that the Old Firm effect is not merely due to the presence of a high-profile football match in the city (and potentially the excessive alcohol consumption and expression of hegemonic masculinity that is often associated with such events), or seasonality, or weekday effects. Nonetheless, we acknowledge the limitations of the approach adopted and identify avenues for further work to better understand this association (Williams et al., 2013, p. 5).

A further Scottish study conducted by Dickson, Jennings and Koop (Dickson, Jennings, & Koop, 2012,) adopted methods which broadly aligned with that of Card and Dahl (Card & Dahl, 2011) mentioned above. They examined police data containing all incidents of DV from 2003- 2011 when Scottish Premier League matches which involved Rangers or Celtic played. A key tenet of their research was whether an unexpected loss might lead to an increase in DV reporting; they isolated aspects of the game accounting for variables such as the context of the game i.e. whether the teams were traditional rivals/the game was controversial. Allowing for day of week, whether it was a holiday period and where the game was played, they found a ‘very large and significant effect on domestic violence associated with Old Firm matches’ (Dickson, Jennings, & Koop, 2012, p. 5). They reported an average rise in reporting of DV incidents by 36% when an Old Firm match took place: outcome may be significant on DV reporting, but only when there was an unexpected loss (Dickson et al., 2012). Interestingly they found that those matches which were not Old Firm fixtures, did not involve traditional rival teams, and were not televised were associated with a reduction in DV reporting. These findings raise complicated issues which the authors themselves did not seek to resolve. The study may be seen to indicate that team allegiance should be regarded as a highly significant factor in DV reporting. Further, one might theorise that a match viewed remotely (perhaps on the television) presents a greater risk of DV: conjecture which only adds to the debate.

Several studies have examined the nexus between football and DVA in a broader setting of the United Kingdom. These mainly quantitative studies have generally focused on the FIFA World Cup tournament (Crowley et al., 2014). The FIFA World Cup finals were the focus of the 2006 Home Office Domestic Violence Enforcement Campaign for that year. Incorporating data from seventeen police forces across England and Wales the report concluded that incidents of DV (as reported to the police) rose by up to a third when the England football team played (Police and Crime Standards Directorate, 2006). The report affirmed that ‘[m]ajor sporting events do

not cause DV, as perpetrators are responsible for their actions' (Police and Crime Standards Directorate, 2006, p. 36). In the absence of further enquiry, however, the authors speculated that high levels of alcohol consumption, combined with the emotional nature of the games, increased the prevalence of such incidents.

Researchers once again took the FIFA World Cup as the subject of analysis when they considered incidences of DA reporting to Lancashire Police around the time of the 2002, 2006 and 2010 FIFA tournaments. Their findings suggested that reported DA rose by 26% when the English national team won or drew and 38% increase when the national team lost (Kirby et al., 2014). The findings, although limited in size and once again restricted by police data, are consistent with earlier research by suggesting that football, which by virtue of its location and status was likely to have been watched remotely, can have an impact on local DV reporting (Card & Dahl, 2011). Similarly, Brimicombe and Café took the 2010 FIFA World Cup tournament as their unit of study (Brimicombe & Cafe, 2012, p. 35). Taking a control period of June/July 2009 and using data DV from 33 English police forces they compared England match days to non-England match days. They reported an increase in DV reporting when England either won (27.7%) or lost (35.5%). They concluded that match outcome was 'crucial' in assessing the risk of DA (Brimicombe & Cafe, 2012, p. 35). Both the studies outlined above, are limited in that they did not account for variables, such as whether other sporting events were taking place at the same time or the significance of a match in terms of the overall outcome of the tournament, for example in the latter study the loss resulted in England exiting the tournament.

It is important to stress, the dearth of research which considers DVA prevalence outside the realm of football. In the context of rugby union, unpublished police data has disclosed a significant rise in DV reporting in Wales around the time of Rugby Six Nations Championship: in 2010 during one weekend when Wales played England in Cardiff there was a 79% increase in DV reporting to the police (Bolter, 2010). This has been supplemented by a cluster of studies conducted, in Cardiff, a city significant in terms of Rugby heritage and the Six Nations Rugby Championship (Harris, 2006). The studies although not directly relating to DVA, explored the relationship between sport (including rugby) and violence. They are significant in that they have been used to inform DVA research and policy (Police and Crime Standards Directorate, 2006). Sivarajasingam *et al* in their analysis of emergency admissions over a five year period found that rugby (but not football) international matches held in the city of Cardiff accounted for a significant increase in hospital admissions (Sivarajasingam, Corcoran, Jones, Ware, & Shepherd, 2004). Further, researchers who took home and away soccer and rugby matches as their focus, concluded that assault injury resulting

in Emergency Department treatment was more frequent when national teams won as opposed to lost, leading them to posit that winning led to celebration, increased emotion and alcohol consumption (Sivarajasingam et al., 2004). For a cohort of Rugby supporters at an international stadium team success and not failure increased aggression, so that the researchers concluded that ‘happiness’ was not increased when their home team won (Moore, Shepherd, Eden, & Sivarajasingam, 2007). These findings although not in the realm of DVA are consistent with those highlighted above which have served to highlight the importance of match outcome (Brimicombe & Cafe, 2012; Card & Dahl, 2011; Kirby et al., 2014).

As will be seen (see Chapter 3.8) research in this field, has fuelled an interest by policy makers and campaigners alike as they consider the potential for an increase in DVA at the time of sporting events, particularly football matches and tournaments. The literature which takes the prevalence of DVA in a sporting context (football and rugby) within in the United Kingdom, whilst sparse (Williams & Neville, 2014), must be viewed against the backdrop of a topic which has attracted intensive, international scholarly attention. Studies conducted both in the United Kingdom and further afield have served to highlight the diverse and complex variables which make it difficult for researchers to unpick and understand any connection between DVA reporting and combat sport. Important questions regarding this association remain unresolved, a task which is further hindered by the sensitive nature of DVA itself (see Chapter 2.4). It may be argued that data interpretation, limited in the United Kingdom to police data, maybe considered too crude and prone to reducing DVA to a one off incident (Brimicombe & Cafe, 2012) neglecting the contemporary understanding of DVA as being a pattern of behaviours. Scholars have called for more nuanced research (Palmer, 2011b) to interrogate this nexus (Radford & Hudson, 2005). In the section below, I explore some of the more prominent theories which have been employed to provide insights into the association between sport, mainly football, and DVA.

3.7 Theorising the link between combat sport and domestic violence and abuse

Academics across the disciplines have strived to understand the complexities which the interplay between sporting events and DVA present. In doing so they have identified a range of social and cultural factors which may intersect to contribute to such an occurrence. It has been argued that theory has grown faster than research and little systematic investigation has been carried out to describe or document this apparent connection (Sabo et al., 2000). These comments made by Sabo and his

colleagues remain relevant almost two decades later; it is still the case that whilst theory exists there is sparse academic enquiry which has probed this phenomenon.

3.7.1 Fandom, watching sport and domestic violence and abuse

A number of American scholars, building on older psychological studies (Arms, Russell, & Sandilands, 1979; Celozzi, Kazelskis, & Gutsch, 1981; Goldstein & Arms, 1971), have hypothesised that watching violence apparent in some sports (not limited to combat sport) increases aggression in some viewers (Case & Boucher, 1981; Gunter, 2006; Johnson & Schiappa, 2010). Below I explore some of the interdisciplinary research which has considered why watching sport and sporting fandom may increase the risk of DVA for some women.

Sport fandom and sport spectatorship play a major role in British culture and society with football being culturally dominant in the United Kingdom as a spectator sport (Parry, Jones, & Wann, 2014). Men and women experience sport spectatorship and fandom (Parry et al., 2014), however, it is men who are typically construed as being sports fans (Radford & Hudson, 2005). It is suggested that this notion, of the male sports fan, has been perpetuated by research which has neglected women who watch sport (Jones, 2008; Pope, 2011). In an attempt to counter the binary nature of combat sport consumption the Thatcherite Government sought to involve more families in football (Crowley et al., 2014) and successive governments have strived to feminise the football fan base (Spandler & McKeown, 2012). According to Pope, despite these efforts, women football supporters continue to be dismissed as inauthentic as compared with ‘males as a homogenous group of ‘authentic’, traditional, usually working-class fans’ (Pope, 2011, p. 471).

It is argued that sports spectators should not to be construed as constituting a ‘monolithic mass’ (Gantz & Wenner, 1995, p. 57). A distinction may be drawn between the spectator - the casual viewer and the sports fan - who emotionally invests in their chosen sport (Gantz & Wenner, 1991). Compared with other genres of televised viewing sports fans are more likely to engage in pregame planning, they have more motivation to spectate and are emotionally involved and invested about sporting outcomes (Gantz, Wang, Paul, & Potter, 2006). This marker of being a sports fan may be socially and culturally significant in that fans may use sports events and their team affiliation to construct, maintain and bolster their own social identity (Sabo et al., 2000; Wann & Branscombe, 1993). British sports fans present as a highly identified male group where fathers are culturally significant as a socializing agent into sport fandom (Parry et al., 2014).

It has been suggested that unequal football fandom within a mixed sex relationship, may be a significant variable for DVA (Gantz, Wang, & Bradley, 2006, p. 366). Where the male partner is the greater fan, sport becomes a site for conflict 'on occasion televised sports can trigger an ugly and violent confrontation between spouses that quickly and clearly threatens the relationship itself' (Gantz, Wang, & Bradley, 2006, p. 380). Such assertions should be approached with caution as the study was not peer reviewed (Grohol, 2010), it was quantitative in nature, so that any conjecture regarding the link between fanship, DV and sport is generated by speculation rather than qualitative enquiry.

The growth of the media opened up new channels through which sport could reach the masses beyond the sporting venue (Gunter, 2006). For many, television viewing dominates home leisure time and sports events of both national and international importance are often viewed on the television (Gantz, Wang, & Bradley, 2006). This consumption, through the media, differs from watching a sporting event live. It is framed by the commentators, whose language and interpretation can never be regarded as neutral (Messner, Duncan, & Jensen, 1993). The sporting discourse includes 'war talk...the commercials are clearly aimed at appealing to "macho" men, often to the detriment of women' (Adubato, 2016, p. 14). The commenters adopt a discourse through which they 'valorise and naturalise men's capacity for violence' (Sabo et al., 2000, p. 129). Scholars have argued the sports media is complicit in maintaining oppressive gender and sexual ideology by 'reproducing traditional masculinity, sexism and hetero sexism' (Nylund, 2004, p. 136). The representation of hegemonic masculinity inherent in many sports, as channelled by the media, suggests that violence is an acceptable male practice both on and off the playing field (Wenner & Gantz, 1998). Boys learn what it is to be men when their 'core identity' is framed through this sports media lens (Messner, 2013, p. 113). The message, relayed to a wide social realm, is that 'the sports game is no longer a game...but rather a spectacle where gender roles are reinforced by celebrating and rewarding 'masculine' behaviour (Johnson & Schiappa, 2010, p. 58). Thus, men and boys access hegemonic masculinity through televised sport (Messner, Dunbar, & Hunt, 2000). It acts as a terrain for the elevation of men as the superior gender (Messner, 2013); where women are depicted as other (Messner et al., 1993). Coakley reminds us, however, that such representations do not occur in a 'social, cultural or political vacuum' (Coakley, 1988, p. 332) and must be viewed as being located in a wider dynamic. Palmer cautions that to over-rely on hegemonic masculinity serves to overlook other social supports and connections which are available to male sports fans (Palmer & Thompson, 2007).

It was this form of extreme masculinity expressed through sports fandom which Sabo and his colleagues considered significant when they explored women's experiences of DV. Their research which was qualitative in nature was carried out in the United States in the late 1990's (Sabo et al., 2000). It comprised of interviewing eighteen women who experienced DV in the context of their partner watching televised sporting events (mainly NFL football, basketball and hockey) at home. The participants identified their partners as being deep-rooted fans who invested much of their identity in televised sports and the games' outcome:

The men...seemed to seek refuge in the symbolic universes of televised sports and its gripping diversion from everyday life, the lines of separation between aggression, frustration and manly struggle for power on the screen and in the living room seemed to blur and rupture, contributing to the seemingly senseless and brutal attacks on their women partners. Indeed, the men in this study did not find sanctuary in the manly world of televised sport, but rather, there seemed to be connections between the aggression of athletes, the media representations of athletic struggles for dominance and the male fans dispositions toward aggression in the domestic setting (Sabo et al., 2000, p. 139).

The participants identified, *inter alia*, substance abuse, frustration and gambling as being coincidental to the abuse they sustained, however, it was a violent masculinity which they distinguished as being the dominant contributor to their partner's violent behaviour towards them. The researchers concluded that watching sport enabled the men to define their masculinity in a manner which included using violence towards their female partners. The authors recognised that their sample size was small and warned against generalisations, thus reinforcing the notion that the association between sport and DVA is inexact, complex and likely to evade final analysis. The findings, nonetheless, provide credence to the theory that watching combat sports, for some fans, may both 'inform and inflame their social construction of violent masculinity' (Sabo & Jansen, 1998, p. 208).

The research carried out by Sabo, Gray and Moore bears some similarities to my research, however, there are some important differences. The study identified perpetrators who viewed sport on the television whereas I was not concerned with how the sport was viewed whether at a venue or at home. The American researchers limited their enquiry to those who had experienced physical violence, in that it was restricted to those who had been 'beaten during or after a TV sports event' (Sabo et

al., 2000, p. 132). In contrast, my study has incorporated contemporary understandings of DVA including a pattern of behaviours which may or may not include physical assaults (Home Office, 2013a). The research conducted by Sabo *et al.* was carried out in the United States which has a different sporting heritage and profile to that of the United Kingdom - a variable apparent in the data itself where the participants spoke primarily of their partners watching NFL football, basketball and hockey, sports which are not dominant in the United Kingdom. This older research confers some important insights into this phenomenon, however, it presents in a markedly different context to the current study.

3.7.2 The triad: alcohol, domestic violence and abuse and sport

The role alcohol plays in DVA occurrence remains unresolved: research suggests that those who use DVA, including those who perpetrate sexual violence (Phorano, Nthomang, & Ntseane, 2005), are likely to have either drunk alcohol or used drugs (Cunradi *et al.*, 2002a; Ediomomo-Ubong, 2014; Peralta, Tuttle, & Steele, 2010). So that it is uncontroversial to suggest that where DVA exists alcohol is often apparent (Crowley *et al.*, 2014). Commenting that 'the use of alcohol appears to be symbolically meaningful in its association with masculinity performance and risk taking in particular' (Peralta *et al.*, 2010, p. 510). Peralta and his colleagues identified alcohol as being a variable associated with intimate personal violence across ethnic, socio-economic and racial divides (Peralta *et al.*, 2010). It is, nonetheless, important to emphasise that alcohol consumption may present as only one of several factors which might be present when such abuse occurs (Koss & Gaines, 1993; Lisco, Leone, Gallagher, & Parrott, 2015; Reichel, 2017; Renzetti *et al.*, 2015). Alcohol consumption may often be present, however, it does not and cannot cause DVA (Messner & Montez de Oca, 2005; Police and Crime Standards Directorate, 2006). The part played by alcohol within abusive relationships should be approached with caution: perpetrators of abuse may use alcohol consumption to rationalize, justify, or minimize their abusive behaviour (Anderson & Umberson, 2001). Alcohol may act as an excuse for the abuser to behave in a manner which they would not otherwise adopt (Javaid, 2015):

...alcohol is not causal in relation to intimate partner violence but it does offer the offender a 'shield', which allows them to identify themselves not as a 'violent abuser' but rather as someone whose drinking can lead them to do things they otherwise would not do (Javaid, 2015, p. 1475).

Sport has long been viewed as a site for alcohol consumption (Nelson & Wechsler, 2003; Wenner, 1998; Young, 2012) so that whether a participant or spectator you are subjected to the message that alcohol and sport are inextricably linked (Jones, Phillipson, & Lynch, 2006). Reinforcing the popular perception that football and alcohol go hand-in-hand (Thompson, Palmer, & Raven, 2011). It is argued that excessive alcohol consumption may be viewed by some as being an important element of aggressive male sporting cultures (Ostrowsky, 2016; Palmer & Thompson, 2007; Young, 2012). This contradictory union between sport and alcohol (Palmer, 2014b) has been formalised and condoned by the lucrative commercial association between alcohol, advertising and sporting activities (Messner & Montez de Oca, 2005; Palmer, 2011a). Dominant masculinities often associated with DVA are apparent in alcohol advertising and feed into negative views of gender such as toughness and anti-women with potential implications for DVA (Lisco et al., 2015; Towns, Parker, & Chase, 2012). It has been suggested that sport spectatorship combined with the consumption of alcohol may contribute to an increased assertion of hegemonic masculinity in some males (Palmer, 2014b). So that:

The identities portrayed for young men in some of the more recent [alcohol] advertisements were that of 'losers', the 'everyday guy', or the 'loveable larkin' who engaged in 'laddish' behaviours that involved consuming excess alcohol, watching televised sports and doing loutish things. Women remained peripheral or in subservient roles in these advertisements, or in opposition to men (Towns et al., 2012, p. 398)

Academics considering sport related DVA have speculated that alcohol is likely to present as a feature (Crowley et al., 2014; Palmer, 2011b). Campaigns aimed at highlighting the nexus have gone further by suggesting that alcohol may be a significant factor in such sport related abuse (Alcohol Concern Wales/Cymru, 2010). It may be argued that such a contention may be too crude an interpretation and 'more rigorous research is needed to further investigate the correlation between alcohol, domestic abuse and sporting events' (Alcohol Concern Wales/Cymru, 2010). A nexus has been suggested between alcohol and some aggressive, male, sporting cultures (Palmer, 2011a; Palmer & Thompson, 2007), however, without further enquiry it would be too generalised and unsophisticated to suggest a link between those who drink alcohol, watch sport and perpetrate acts of DVA. A more nuanced approach is

necessary to unpick the complexities which surround women's experiences of DVA at the time of sporting events (Kirby et al., 2014).

3.7.3 Sport and permissions for violence

In their study, Radford and Hudson explored the concept that sport gave 'permissions' for violence: they theorized that football provides approval for violence in public and private spheres. Whilst not specific to DV their research was motivated by the increase in pressure on refuge services in the North East of England around the time of high activity for the nationally popular North Eastern football team Middlesbrough or 'the Boro' (Radford & Hudson, 2005) . Through focus groups with women who utilised refuge services, interviews with football fans and a reflection on their own experiences as local residents and workers in the field of DV - the researchers charted the masculinist emotions which football provoked and the fervent passion which an allegiance with the locally based, high profile team generated. They theorized that the creation of male identity through fandom, established an 'other' which includes women, who may then become the targets of DV. The researchers reflected that the institution of football and its predictable media attention imbued certain 'permissions' where violence was concerned: on the pitch, in the community and at home. At the time of their research a well-known football player, Paul Gascoigne, an admitted DVA perpetrator had recently been signed by 'the Boro'. The researchers argued that such a signing, regardless of his known violent history, sent a message to fans that his behaviour was acceptable or at the very least a private matter. The authors hypothesised that football sanctioned DV through a 'culture of masculinity predicated on football' (Radford & Hudson, 2005, p. 192). The use of violence on the pitch by footballers created a culture of masculinity that legitimised violence which then permeated the home to the detriment of women. The researchers identified how women, at the refuge based focus groups, perceived football to be a threat and distrusted men's dedication to the game:

The football club is transformed into family and community. Support, even love, for the club is translated into hatred of the other, the opposition, the enemy. As football reaches into and becomes the home, family and community, the new cult generates a shift in the traditional boundaries between the private and public spheres. We suggest that it need not be a surprise that masculinist values and permissions for violence are taken back home (Radford & Hudson, 2005, p. 197).

The research was carried out in the late 1990's; it clearly focused on a particular football team in a English northern town and sought to unravel the implications that the 'football mania' of that period presented to the local community and women in particular. Despite this exact link to a time and place, the issues it raises are contemporary: at the time of my data collection there was a storm of media attention regarding the willingness of football teams to sign the professional footballer Ched Evans upon his release from prison having served a term for an offence of raping a woman (Anderson, 2015). This signing was mentioned in conversation several times by the gatekeepers when I visited to promote my study.

The Radford and Hudson study is important in the context of my research. Epistemologically the adoption of a qualitative method which includes women who use refuge services is an acknowledgment that the association between sport and violence is multifaceted: understandings gained through theory and analysis must be driven by broad yet systematic investigation. The authors acknowledge that the interplay between sport and DVA is complex and without concrete answers:

In seeking to explore connections between football, football mania, football related violence and violence against women we are not engaging in the construction of new myths to condone this violence. We are not seeking to add 'blame the ball' to existing justifications of the blame the weather, blame the drink, ilk. Rather our aim is to forward an analysis of the gender power dynamics underpinning and thereby linking the different forms and contexts of men's violence in patriarchal societies (Radford & Hudson, 2005, p. 191).

Akin to Radford and Hudson I appreciate there is no ultimate truth and my study may reveal and obscure in equal measure. Conversely, whereas Radford and Hudson (2005) do not disclose the accounts of women who have experienced DVA at the time of sporting events such narratives are core to my study. My study explores the accounts the women provided: it is underpinned by their knowledge and experiences. Finally, this study is more wide-ranging than that of Radford and Hudson in that the women who took part were not limited to sharing experiences as they pertained to one sport or team.

This chapter has presented an examination of the research which has formed the backdrop to this study in terms of the prevalence and theory regarding the

sports/DVA nexus. In the section below I conclude my review of the literature by exploring how sport has been utilised as means of tackling DVA.

3.8 Campaigns which target domestic violence and abuse through sport

In the United Kingdom and globally, media campaigns have become an important component in preventative approaches employed to raise awareness of violence against women (Harne & Radford, 2008; Stanley et al., 2016). Initially women, who were viewed as being most likely affected, were encouraged to identify abuse and seek help (Stanley et al., 2016). Campaigns have, however, evolved and become more nuanced in approach targeting specific areas rather than viewing women as a monolithic group (Gadd, Corr, Fox, & Butler, 2014). It argued that strategies aimed at DVA prevention should be inclusive and more recently the focus has extended to perpetrators with the aim of encouraging them to change their behaviour (Stanley et al., 2016). As Dyson and Flood remind us:

[Violence against women is a social issue] that goes beyond individuals, that needs to be addressed at, and involve all levels of society, not only men. Nonetheless, interventions with men are an important part of the overall solution, because their normative environment may support individual men's beliefs and behaviours (Dyson & Flood, 2008, p. 19).

In the realm of sport, Williams and Neville suggest that 'the creation of occasions for men (both athletes and spectators) to publicly express their opposition to gender violence can send a powerful message about group's social norm' (Williams & Neville, 2014, p. 12). According to Flood where there is sport, there are men and any approach which seeks to address DVA must 'address men and masculinities' (Flood, 2007, p. 3). Sporting organizations, as a terrain through which peer relations and cultures encourage negative attitudes towards women, must be included in any preventative strategy (Dyson & Flood, 2008). It is thus paradoxical that sport, as an institution which may present a risk to women, has been used as a vehicle for several campaigns seeking to reinforce the message that DVA will not be tolerated. This approach is not novel to DVA in that a range of health and welfare programmes have utilised sport as a means of accessing men in particular (Spandler & McKeown, 2012).

Responding to analysis of their own data, the police have recognised the potential for an increase in DVA around major football matches (Police and Crime Standards Directorate, 2006). At the time of the 2006 FIFA World Cup, Hampshire Constabulary distributed items with an anti DVA message which included football themed beer mats. Whilst West Midlands Police created a range of posters aimed at DV offenders which were circulated to public houses for display in the male toilets (Police and Crime Standards Directorate, 2006).

In 2010 the Greater Manchester police, in conjunction with local authorities, the Greater Manchester Domestic Abuse Helpline and Greater Manchester Public Health Network launched 'End the Fear' (French, 2010). This DV awareness campaign utilised online images and posters displayed in public houses and medical centres. It adopted an image of bloodstained bottles and a bloodied football shirt with 'Strike Her' on the back. It aimed to encourage those who experienced DVA to report incidences or to seek other support. The police hailed the project as a success when they recorded the highest number of DV calls that year following England's knock out match with Germany (French, 2010).

Ahead of the 2014 FIFA World Cup Tournament, Women's Aid, supported by the Premier League and British Telecom, launched 'Football United Against Domestic Violence' (Pye, 2013; Womens Aid, 2016). A campaign which engaged football clubs, organizations, players and fans to commit to raise awareness regarding DV. In Wales, Alcohol Concern Wales/Cymru presented a briefing which commented on the increase in DVA reporting around sport in this way:

Increased reporting may be, at least in part, a result of successful awareness-raising campaigns encouraging women to report incidents at these times or because sporting events may provide better opportunities to report incidents, for example whilst their partner is attending the event or viewing the event elsewhere, such as at the pub (Alcohol Concern Wales/Cymru, 2010, p. 3).

Women's Aid were proactive and visible at the time of the 2016 Union of European Football Association (UEFA) tournament, reinforcing their national campaign directed towards combating football related DVA (Womens Aid, 2016). Over successive years, sporting organizations including football, ice hockey, boxing, cricket and rugby union donned white ribbons to represent their commitment to the global campaign to end violence against women (The White Ribbon Campaign).

The possibility for a rise in DVA at the time of major rugby matches has been acknowledged within the rugby sporting community. In the United Kingdom, Rugby Union matches have been the subject of campaigns which have addressed the possibility of an increase in DV around high profile matches (for example: The Women's Institute, 2012; This is Cheshire, 2012). The Welsh Government have also reconfirmed their commitment to tackle DVA as it relates to high profile sports (Football, Rugby Union and League) particularly those played in Wales (Welsh Government, 2013). A 2012 campaign run by the Welsh Government, which took DVA at the time of major sports tournaments as its focus and specifically promoted a dedicated DVA helpline, identified a 10% increase in calls over the period of the operation (Welsh Government, 2013).

The role of media campaigns in the identification and reduction of DVA is debated (Hester & Westmarland, 2005; West, 2013). It is suggested that the impact may be partial, limited to informing those who experience abuse that it is a crime and so directing them to help and support (Harne & Radford, 2008). Critics aver that publicity campaigns may be poorly designed and provide misinformation about the dynamics of DVA (West, 2013). Further, it is argued that the influence public campaigns have in challenging abusers is unclear (Harne & Radford, 2008); the message they portray may be considered over-simplistic in terms of targeting perpetrators' behaviours (Gadd et al., 2014; West, 2013). Scholars have called for further enquiry by commenting 'public campaigns are such a powerful tool, inaccurate campaign design may actually exacerbate the situation' (West, 2013, p. 196). According to Kirby *et al.* in the realm of sport related DV, ongoing research will play a vital role in terms of framing interventions which might be tailored to specific and identifiable sporting events (Kirby et al., 2014).

3.9 Summary

DVA is understood as a pattern of abusive behaviours which may or may not include physical violence. This review has highlighted how DVA is to be regarded as a serious, gendered, social issue which often occurs in the private sphere. It has identified the severe, long term impact that DVA can have on women, threatening their physical and mental health.

It has been argued that some combat sports, particularly football (American and European models) have a legacy which is imbued with male values of strength, power and dominance, attributes which have extended beyond the pitch into athletes' private lives to the detriment of women. Much of the available research regarding the interplay between sport and DVA has been concerned with prevalence, seeking to identify what the association might be. The research mainly emanates from the United States and has focused on sports with a transatlantic cultural significance. There is a dearth of scholarly research within the United Kingdom; that which exists is limited, it has mainly focused any association between large scale football matches or tournaments (played home and abroad) and DV reporting to the police. The police and other organisations, relying on their own data and academic research in this field, have initiated and supported campaigns which have highlighted the potential for an increase in DVA reporting around football and rugby matches. This study concerns women who have experienced DVA, it is by exploring their accounts of the association between the abuse they endured and sporting events that new insights will be gained. In the following chapter (chapter four), I introduce and justify the methodological frameworks which have underpinned this research study.

Chapter Four: Research Methodology

4.1 Structure of the chapter

The terms ‘methodology’ and ‘methods’ have become entwined and are often confused (Harding, 1980; Smith, 1987). In this study, I confront the issues surrounding methodology and methods in two discrete, yet connected, chapters (chapters four and five). It is desirable at the outset to define what is meant by both within this thesis. ‘Methodology’ denotes the theory and analysis of how research should proceed; it serves to link a particular ontology to a particular epistemology and so create a pathway of how to produce valid knowledge of social reality (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). Methodology does not by its nature (but might) indicate a method of data collection (Harvey, 1990; Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002; Skinner et al., 2005). In contrast, the term ‘method’ may be understood as being a technique or tool for gathering evidence such as interviews, focus groups and so on (Harding, 1980). I use the term methodology to describe my philosophical framework and method to denote the mechanics of my data collection.

This chapter offers a discussion of the theoretical approaches which have most influenced this study. My thesis is not driven by a single methodological position but rather it draws upon different and at times vying theoretical frameworks. FSE informed aspects which included the ethical considerations and data collection. I fore-fronted a Lacanian orientation, however, when analysing the women’s accounts. In this chapter I explore the pathway that led me to these apparently theoretically diverse and arguably ontologically opposed frameworks before interrogating some of the key tenets of these two perspectives which form the backdrop to this project. I conclude this chapter by discussing how I was able to accommodate these contrasting theoretical positions to produce a coherent and novel approach to my research topic.

4.2 Finding self

When I started this PhD, it was the notion of a theoretical framework which intimidated me most. I felt inadequate through my lack of knowledge and put myself under pressure to identify and adopt a theoretical stance which would inform my project; this did not go to plan. The compulsion I felt was to find a framework which would ‘do the job’ rather than contemplating what job I was asking the framework to do. As Liamputtong cautions:

As researchers, we need to stand back and look closely at the relationships of our methodology and the data we collect and represent because this will allow us to undertake good research that will be beneficial to those we work with in our research endeavours (Liamputtong, 2010, p. 236).

My ultimate choice of orientation has not just been about my research goals. It has included an examination of self - 'who I am' and my understanding of the world I inhabit. An acknowledgement that the researcher and the researched are positioned differently but play a reciprocal and arguably mutual role in the production of knowledge. I have been compelled to carry out an analysis of this symbiotic relationship between self and Other: the role and influence my subjectivity brings to the construction of Other. In the following chapter I expand on this aspect of my study when I discuss the issue of reflexivity.

4.3 Ontological orientation

The nature of this project, combined with my theoretically driven understanding of the notion of truth, have guided and informed the ontological orientation of this study. My project takes the experiences of the women as its core and it was imperative that the route I took both respected and amplified their voices. The topic under consideration dictated that it would require careful and sensitive planning: the women who took part in this study would be sharing personal and intimate accounts of difficult events in their lives. It was key that those women would have the opportunity, time and space to relate their accounts. Issues regarding the balance of power were an important consideration informing my ontological perspective throughout my study. I elaborate on this aspect in the following chapter.

As the researcher, I sought to disclose a meaning revealed through an exploration of the women's descriptions of their social world (structures, systems and cultures). An interpretation, by me, of their interpretation of the world. In this way, my study did not seek an ultimate truth. My ontological orientation had to include an acknowledgment that truth and reality are contested; aspects which serve only to influence knowledge. I resolved that what was required was a research strategy which was compatible both to the sensitive research topic and my own developing position regarding episteme.

Interpretivism, as a means of knowing, demands that the researcher grasps the subjective meaning of social action (Bryman, 2012). It insists that meaning can only be realised through a framework which explores multiple realities taking account of

cultural and historical location (Gray, 2013) and encompassing diverse values and beliefs (David & Sutton, 2011). I considered that this ontological position would empower the women who took part in this study, providing them with an opportunity to convey their sensitive accounts. Further, it would permit me to delve into and explore their descriptions and so ascribe a meaning to the accounts they gave. I concluded that this paradigm was well suited not only to the nature of my enquiry but also to my own perception of truth and its fragility.

Having established my ontological and epistemological roots what was now required was a theoretical orientation which was aligned with these foundations. Below, I present the philosophical underpinnings which have provided a context to this study. I describe my route to a feminist framework before going on to present an examination of the FSE. I then go on to explain my evolution towards the work of Jacques Lacan before providing a summation of those aspects of Lacanian thought which were applied to this study. In relation to both, I illustrate how these theoretical approaches were apposite in the context of this study.

4.4 Feminist theory

Feminist theory is the philosophical discourse borne of feminism. My pathway to feminist theory was initially via my career working as a specialist criminal barrister - my practice comprising cases which involved sexual violence, sexual abuse and men's violence towards women. Through my caseload, I was exposed to the stark and often gendered nature of violence and abuse. I observed that abuse, violence and subjugation may be viewed as a gendered issue. These professional experiences fuelled an interest in feminist thought. I therefore started this project against a backdrop of an established if somewhat superficial understanding of feminist thought. This allegiance influenced my preliminary view that such a lens could be useful to this project. These thoughts distilled as my understandings progressed and my theoretical horizons broadened. As my approach became more subtle and discerning I considered which feminist philosophical perspective would be most useful. In this section I explore some of the key tenets of feminist theory before going on to present a discussion of how I employed FSE as being a valuable and productive framework to inform this study.

It is important to preface this section with an acknowledgement that there is no unified feminist school of thought, rather, varieties of feminist thinking. Varied feminist discourses offer distinct feminist epistemologies and so provide contrasting

lenses for the construction of knowledge (Webb, 2000). These may be regarded as strands, categories, labels, perspectives or views (Tong, 1998). The school encompasses a wealth of 'species under its genus' such as liberal, Marxist, radical, psychoanalytic, socialist, essentialist and postmodern thinking (Tong, 2013, p. 1). Working within and extending existing critiques, feminist thought has emerged as an antithesis to positivist philosophical assumptions (May, 2011). It insists that previous research which has been constructed and presented as value free has been 'male orientated' knowledge (Westmarland, 2001). Thus researchers have rallied against the prevalent male bias which has arguably dominated such research (Roberts, 2013). Feminist scholars have extended anti-positivist methodological positions (Oakley, 1998); promoting a subjectivity of social action which broadly aligns with my ontological position of interpretivism (Bryman, 2012). These feminist methodologies whilst having their roots in a traditional means of knowing have 'interrogated, disrupted, and modified dominant models of knowledge building' (Hesse-Biber, 2013b, p. 4). As Millen reminds us feminist theory should not be considered a static concept (Millen, 1997). It has been likened to an amoeba which travels everywhere and in every direction fed by the women's movement (Reinharz & Davidman, 1992). Amongst the broad variety of feminist thought, no one single feminist methodology prevails (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002), as divisions exist both within and between the differing genus (Westmarland, 2001). This diversity of understandings has led to a debate whether a distinctive feminist methodology can be said to exist (Harding, 1980; Hesse-Biber, 2013b; Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002; Skinner et al., 2005; Webb, 2000). Further, the absence of philosophical unity has led to accusations that the multiplicity deflects from the distinctiveness of good feminist research and leaves feminist researchers wanting of a model paradigm so that points of agreement become obscured (Ferree, 1990; Harding, 1980). It is not within the reach of this project to provide a full compendium of feminist theory; indeed there is no consensus to what feminist research might comprise (Maynard & Purvis, 2013). Hesse-Biber summed up her understanding of the feminist interviewer's obligations in this way:

As a feminist interviewer I am interested at getting at the subjugated knowledge of the diversity of women's realities that often lie hidden and unarticulated. I am asking questions and exploring issues that are of particular concern to women's lives. I am interested in issues of social change and social justice for women and other oppressed groups, as a feminist interviewer, I am aware of the nature of my relationship to those whom I interview, careful to understand my particular personal and

research standpoints and what role I play in the interview process in terms of my power and authority over the interview situation (Hesse-Biber, 2013a, p. 184) .

In the section below I present an exploration of some of the key principles which may be considered by some feminist scholars to be the tenets and goals which serve to bond this diverse movement (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002; Skinner et al., 2005; Stanley & Wise, 2002).

According to Ramazanoglu and Holland feminist methodology is distinguished by its relationship between epistemology and ontology ‘what is distinctive is the particular political positioning of theory, epistemology and ethics which enables the feminist researcher to question existing ‘truths’ and explore relations between knowledge and power’ (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002, p. 16). Insights gained from diverse critiques provide a means of scrutinizing not only the content of the knowledge but also the means in which that research was ‘conceived, produced, placed in the public domain, and justified as knowledge’ (Millen, 1997, p. 2). As I discuss later, my alignment with feminist thought permitted and obliged me to address how my research was produced, this was especially important when considering issues regarding the balance of power.

Feminist research is not restricted to women’s research involving women (Maynard & Purvis, 2013). It is however argued that a feature of feminist research is the role scholars ascribe to women’s experiences (Hesse-Biber, 2013b). Feminist scholars are bound by a political and ethical code which guides their research and makes them accountable to women (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). In this way researchers have highlighted the subordination of women by virtue of their gender as being pivotal ‘the most central and common belief shared by all feminists, whatever your ‘type’ is the belief that that women are oppressed’ (Stanley & Wise, 2002, p. 72).

As this project was grounded in women’s accounts of subjugation I was drawn to feminist thought because of the focus it placed on women and the validation of their experiences (Maynard & Purvis, 2013). My assertion is, however, problematic: tensions arise when it is argued that there is no universal woman and no uniformity in the nature of oppression. In the context of FSE in particular contemporary discussion has warned against presenting women’s experiences as universal (Hill Collins, 1990b). Black feminists have been at the fore-front of this movement when they state that ‘women’ are not unitary and cannot and do not share a common experience (Hill Collins, 1990a). Advocating a position which takes account of *inter*

alia race, class, nationality, sexuality and culture, questions are posed as to whom can know and whose experiences may inform knowledge (Stanley & Wise, 2002; Webb, 2000). Scholars caution that a comparison cannot, and should not, be made between competing knowledge claims from the oppressed (Webb, 2000). Other feminist thinkers avow that no experience can ever be complete: whether it be women's or otherwise, it can only ever be partial and fragmented (Maynard & Purvis, 2013).

Finally, it may be suggested that Feminist scholars are united by an ambition to produce knowledge which is useful in tackling and challenging gender inequality (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002; Skinner et al., 2005; Stanley & Wise, 2002). My role as a PhD student in confronting inequality and bringing about social change is of course limited, however, motivated by a feminist informed framework I was enthused to seek opportunities which would widen awareness of the sensitive and marginalised topic of DVA. I fully embraced this challenge and accomplished a wider audience by being interviewed on a national radio broadcast and presenting my research at numerous academic conferences, both in the United Kingdom and abroad, as well as community and women's groups.

For the reasons mentioned I considered a feminist led methodology would be suitable for the purposes of my study. Working within this framework I required a lens which would be aligned to my core values of respecting the women's accounts coupled with a recognition that subjective experience is valid data. The balance of power was an issue throughout my research and it was important that this facet was addressed, not just at the point of data collection, but throughout. As a means of addressing these issues I resolved that my study would be most closely aligned with FSE. This epistemic position was identified by Harding in her typology which sought to contextualise the feminist epistemological debate (Harding 1987). Below I present a discussion of FSE and how it was usefully applied to my study.

4.5 Feminist standpoint epistemology

In the 1980s and 1990s the third wave of feminism, driven by the diversity of feminist thought, turned its attention to the production of a feminist way of knowing (Webb, 2000). Feminist scholars sought to confront traditional understandings of the nature of knowledge and knowledge production (Hesse-Biber, 2013a). New models emerged - the most influential of which being the concept of standpoint epistemology. 'Feminist objectivity' (Haraway, 1988) and 'strong objectivity' (Harding, 1980, 1993) were advanced as being an antithesis to positivism. This emergent lens took as its focus the relationship between power and knowledge as opposed to seeking to justify

the truth of feminist claims (Harding, 1997). According to Harding strong objectivity focuses on the politics of knowledge production. She argued that attention should be paid to the location and social position of the producers of knowledge (Harding, 1993). This transformative knowledge shifted the balance by taking subjects and their relationships as its focus whereby women were embraced as a means of knowing: researchers paid attention to women's lived experiences and utilised their unique gendered position within a heterogeneous cultural space (Haraway, 1988). Advocates of FSE have argued that those in positions of power can only ever have a partial and fragmented view of knowledge (Hartsock, 1987). Alternatively, women are located as being able to produce different and better knowledge as a result of their subjugated position within society (Hartsock, 1987; Smith, 1987). Situating women in this way they are better able to confront the dominant, patriarchal power structures inherent within society (Jaggar, 1997). As the power shifts, both the researcher and the researched may be examined and the traditional invisible androcentric researcher becomes a creature of the past, as the researcher's acknowledged location becomes critical to the reproduction of knowledge (Harding, 1980, 1997). The researcher's subjectivity, rather than being shunned, is perceived as a resource (Jaggar, 1997; Webb, 2000). By locating the researcher within the research process, the researcher is exposed and open to scrutiny. Researchers are not limited to producing research but are obliged to take account of the power structures that have thus far been hidden in traditional knowledge production (Hesse-Biber, 2013a).

Critics of FSE argue that its all-encompassing nature leaves it exposed to being dismissed as absolute relativism (Hekman, 1997). For others FSE's proclaimed uniqueness, if it existed at all, can be found in other forms of radical social research (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). The claim for gender specific knowledge has exposed FSE to criticism. For some, FSE promotes essentialist notions of womanhood by assuming that women are caring and nurturing in connection to the knowers (Millen, 1997). Others dispute FSE claims that one gender can have a better or fuller viewpoint, when they argue that all viewpoints are partial and obscured (Haraway, 1988; Maynard & Purvis, 2013). Some post-modern feminists dismiss FSE's claim that 'the oppressed have an epistemological privilege that can see people and events as they really are' (Stanley & Wise, 2002, p. 201): rejecting both the narrative of 'an oppression' and the proclaimed certainty of a relationship between knowledge and truth (Stanley & Wise, 2002; Webb, 2000). Further raising the debate, it is argued that FSE adopts a universal notion of women which discounts varying and vying levels of oppression (Hill Collins, 1990b; Stanley & Wise, 2002; Webb, 2000). A better

course, it is suggested, would be a knowledge borne of a multiplicity of oppressions and inequalities endured by women (Hill Collins, 1990b; Jaggar, 1997).

In the preface to this section I outlined how, from an early stage, I adopted a course which was strongly influenced by feminist theory and FSE in particular. I considered that a feminist-driven method was both compatible and appropriate to my research topic. I felt a strong allegiance to the feminist ethos regarding research practice, particularly in relation to a sensitive and multifaceted area such as DVA. In addition, FSE addressed some of my obligations as a researcher conducting research which centred on women's experiences - a marginalised and sensitive subject. Hill Collins reminds us that epistemological choices should not be consigned to mere passive issues limited to academic debate (Hill Collins, 1990a). The challenge to me, as a researcher, was to put FSE into practice and not allow my epistemological orientation to become simply a matter of record. The women who took part in this study had all experienced abusive and controlling relationships. It was anticipated that when I met them, they would be living in or accessing refuge services. As such, my research required careful and thoughtful planning (Elcioglu, Oncel, & Unluoglu, 2004). In particular, the women's likely subjugation suggested that issues of power and control needed to be addressed throughout the study. In the following chapter (Chapter five) I present an account how FSE was applied to this project, overtly informing my research strategy which included approaches aimed at empowering the women who took part. Further ensuring not to replicate controlling behaviour of the abuser through the research process: recognising the women as 'knowers' rather than 'the objects of study' (Smith, 1987).

Originally it had been my intention to utilise FSE for the entirety of this project including the data analysis. As my project unfolded and progressed, however, I took the opportunity to expand my reading and understandings. I had already begun my analysis chapter and was immersed in my data when I was introduced to the work of Jacques Lacan. Lacan offers an alternative view of the world to that provided by feminist theorists and FSE in particular. Working in the field of psychoanalysis Lacan advanced the premise that the unconscious is structured like a language. Later on in this chapter I provide a detailed examination of Lacan's work; I explore concepts which include 'self' and 'desire' in detail. Lacan posited that 'self' is an illusion which makes sense of our fluctuating experiences, strongly resonating with the data I was then exploring. During my reading of the data I was repeatedly reminded of Lacan's notion of desire especially when the women described their relationships and the abuse they sustained. I felt genuinely excited by the prospect that this alternative lens could present for my project. I became overwhelmed by Lacanian thought and found

myself adapting his understandings to books that I had read and films I had watched. I was thus motivated that a Lacanian interpretation to qualitative research could provide 'new insights' (Vanheule, 2002, p. 339). I was inspired to contemplate how Lacanian concepts could be usefully incorporated within my study.

In the section below I explore some of the key tenets of Lacan's work. I go on to render a critique of how these seemingly incompatible frameworks, feminist theory and psychoanalysis, could be gainfully employed to work together within this project.

4.6 Lacanian theory

The French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan (1901-81), did not proffer a series of complete arguments nor did his papers seek to provide a full account of his theory, rather, taken together they are seen to reflect the foundations of his ideas (Campbell, 2004). He is perceived to be one of the most able, contentious psychoanalysts of this time (Kovacevic, 2013). His writings have been described as demonstrating 'logic, structure and clarity' (Campbell, 2004, p. 31). His influence since the 1960's is beyond doubt, it has 'transcended the confines of psychoanalytical practice and been applied to the study of cultural, social and political processes and phenomena' (Kovacevic, 2013, p. 78). Dominant in psychoanalysis (Fink, 1995) his ideas have been applied to a range of disciplines. His influence is particularly marked in areas such as literary criticism, film theory and art history (for example: Suess, 2003; Žižek, 1992a).

According to Lacan 'self' is a fiction, an illusion through which individuals seek to make sense of their experiences (Lacan, 2004). For Lacan, the human mind is divided between the conscious side, a side which is knowable and an unconscious side which is inaccessible; the drives behind the unconsciousness are unknown and unobtainable. He postulates that the conscious is continually betrayed by the unconscious (Grosz, 2002). The human subject is to be construed as a speaking person who is 'defined by and through language' (Grosz, 2002, p. 148). Lacan sought to explain how the mind comes to be structured and incorporated into a social order (Appignanesi & Garratt, 2007). Akin to structural linguists Lacan used vocabulary symbolically to convey meaning. These linguistic devices provided me with a tangible means through which I was able to represent and attempt to unfurl the challenging phenomena of DVA, offering an alternative interpretation of this multifaceted issue.

I considered Lacan's emphasis on identity was entirely in keeping with my project: DVA is an insidious, deeply intimate experience which is about human subjects and who they are. DVA has at its core the formation of self through relationships with others: as will be seen in a later chapter, the women who took part in this study

reflected on their notion of self and how this had been formed and disrupted by their abusive relationships. A Lacanian framework offered an alternative dynamic when providing an understanding of the web of abuse which is spun by an abusive partner. Further, by taking the women who experience abuse as a focus, a Lacanian emphasis on the subject being formed by language provided an insight into how it was that the abusive partner came to dominate their lives. The Lacanian notions of desire and lack contemplated a biddable, fluid notion of self which was influenced and constituted through other; this logic rendered such a frame particularly suitable to my data analysis. The Lacanian position that 'self' may be subjectively constructed draws parallels with my epistemic foundations that the women who took part in this study were to be located as socially and culturally constructed beings as opposed to being biologically predetermined. Similarly, Lacan's emphasis on the unconscious and his rejection of the natural individual broadly aligned with my approach which denied the notion of essences, preferring instead to view subjects as being adaptable and constituted.

Lacanian theory is not without its critics. His ideas have been condemned by some as impenetrable and unnecessarily difficult (Campbell, 2004; Hayes, 2013b); considered 'opaque and convoluted by many' (Kovacevic, 2013). Lacan said this of his works 'My *Ecrits* are unsuitable for a thesis, particularly an academic thesis: they are antithetical by nature: one either takes what they formulate or one leaves them' (Lemaire, 1977, p. vii). Many have taken Lacan at his word and left his works alone (Hayes, 2013b). I took the opposite view, resolving that his theory provided a flexibility and malleability which were essential to my study and research topic. A Lacanian framework offered both a novel and stimulating lens through which the phenomena of DVA could be explored.

It is important to emphasize that although Lacanian theory has been pivotal to my research analysis, it has been employed with specificity. My goal has been to appropriate, that is to say, to take aspects of Lacan's work and develop them for my own purposes. A task adopted and described by Seshadri-Crooks in her work on Indian Caste identity 'I have tried to work with the richest aspects of the [Lacanian] theory, and in the process have found it necessary to wrestle with it, and to exert considerable force in inducing it to address race' (Seshadri-Crooks, 2002, p. 3). Akin to Seshadri-Crooks I have drawn on aspects of Lacan's work. I have chosen to work with those ideas which I consider to be productive to my study in terms of interpreting the data and improving understandings.

In the section below I present an overview of some the key concepts of the Lacanian theory of identity formation; my discussion is limited in that I pay attention to those models which I have deployed to interpret my data. I present an examination of aspects of Lacanian thought and offer an explanation of their usefulness in the context of this project. I consider the Mirror Stage, the RSI and finally desire. Approached as discrete topics for these purposes the concepts are connected, they interweave and overlap to construct a Lacanian notion of self.

4.6.1 The Mirror Stage

The Mirror Stage represents an important early component in Lacan's work (Lacan, 1949). He suggests that a time comes when an infant (aged 6-18 months) looks at an external image of their body reflected in a mirror and recognises the image as them self. This joyous act which is the first time the infant conceives they are a separate identity, forms the basis of the mental representation of self: the Unified I, the complete self in tension with otherwise fragmented sense of experiences (Lacan, 1949). For the infant the image is more than an image, rather a '*Meconnaissance*' or 'non-recognition' (Bailly, 2012, p. 32); as the child wrongly confuses the distorted reflection to be their identity. From this stage forward, the child appreciates that he is distinct from others, and although separate from others he is dependent on the images of others to form his own representation (Lacan, 2004). The act of recognition, is an intellectual act, as the child translates the image to form an association with the idea of self; thereafter the child will use language to access and form identity, known as the Symbolic Order of which more below. This leads to the formation of the ego and the preconception of the subject. According to Lacan, the ego is neither organic nor nurtured but rather a fictional sense of self molded by the subjective world we encounter (Lacan, 1977a). The Mirror Stage is significant as self-recognition forms the basis of this ego, however, the image is a fantasy or "Ideal-I" (Zakin, 2011). The Imaginary Order is primarily a narcissistic characteristic as the individual strives to emulate a fictional notion of self. This forms the lack, as the subject seeks recognition of Other to unify self, a lacking and desire which is always out of reach. This lacking may be supplemented and filled in by others whom the subject wishes to emulate or be influenced by:

The ego ideal... is both a strength and a weakness: it is a means by which the subject may view her/himself as positive and secure. It is also a lack, the point at which the subject is most vulnerable, because it is determined and conditioned by others (Shaw, 2005, p. 192).

This identification and narcissism form the child's '*petit autre*' through which it builds up ego and also its relationships with other (Bailly, 2012). Lacan's emphasis on the 'I' and the Subject is the linchpin of his psychoanalytical process; the function of the Mirror Stage is to establish a relationship between the body and the Symbolic Order through the Imaginary which is intermittently in tension with the Symbolic (Lacan, 1949). This is not, however, a chronological development; self-constitution acts as a paradigm throughout the subject's life, constantly framing and reframing self through Other.

4.6.2 The Real, The Symbolic and The Imaginary

The RSI has been described as being one of Lacan's most inconsistent and yet one of his most user-friendly concepts (Bailly, 2012). Lacan contended that the psyche could properly be divided into three structures: the Real, the Symbolic and the Imaginary. Lacan drew an analogy between these three structures and the Borromean knot: the three concepts are interlocked and rely upon each other to maintain structure. Were one of the links to be cut, the knot would disentangle (Lacan, 1974; Lowther, 2011).

The Imaginary realm corresponds to the aforementioned Mirror Stage, it represents the process which derives from the encounter between the toddler and its reflected image. It marks the movement from a basic primeval need to a demand. The toddler collates images, not limited to visual senses, (Lacan, 1949) which form 'the clay from which representations will be fashioned' (Bailly, 2012, p. 91). Once the child recognises that it is separate, it begins to feel a lack or loss, a demand which it is impossible to quell. The Imaginary is not fragmented but rather an internalized image which allows the child to make judgements about the world around it (Lacan, 1949). The Imaginary is not temporally limited and accordingly it exerts itself throughout the life span, accompanied by this sense of lacking. It is through this Imaginary that the subject finds their own sense of self but also projects a fantasy notion which is borne of the sense of loss and lacking.

The Imaginary is linked to the Symbolic. In the Symbolic Order, images and words are a depiction of ideas; whereas in the Imaginary they are subjective ideas, they may or may not have meaning for the individual subject. Taken together the Symbolic realm represents the rules which govern the unconscious organization of society (Lacan, 2004). The Symbolic Order operates in the practices of daily lives and is manifest in language, laws and social structures; it has been described as a treaty which links subjects together (Felluga, 2003). The Symbolic acts to link '...subjects together in one action. The human action *par excellence* is originally founded on the

existence of the world of the symbol, namely on laws and contracts' (Lacan, 1991, p. 230). Meaning, through language, appears at stitch-points where the Symbolic and Imaginary connect (Bailly, 2012). The Symbolic pre-exists birth, as before the child's birth the parents adhere to the Symbolic Order (Lacan, 1991). Before a child has gained any language, it obeys an ideational representative, bound to its image by words. This conformity to the Symbolic is catapulted by the Mirror Stage (Lacan, 1949).

Before the Mirror Stage there exists an identification with the ideal or the Real. The Real is that which drives desire: the unattainable. This has been described as 'a symbolic identification with a signifying element' (Leader, 2014, p. 44). The ideal element removes the subject from immersion in the Imaginary: the image of self is constructed through the language and so through the Symbolic. The Real by its very nature is impossible because it is extra linguistic - it is that which we seek in Other to address our own lack (Lacan, 2004). Neonatal creatures know nothing but need and their world is not compromised by language. This state of nature and completeness that can never be retrieved once access to language is gained. In this way, the Real is extra linguistic: it is unobtainable, featureless and indistinguishable. The Real resists capture and symbolism, existing outside symbolism (Fink, 1995).

As examined earlier, this project worked within an ecological framework where DVA is construed as multifaceted phenomenon of which abuse of patriarchal power is a component. I considered a Lacanian interpretation supported the ecological framework that I adopted. This orientation enabled patriarchy to be historically and culturally located as a component within the Symbolic Order. At the end of this chapter, within the context of feminist theory and Lacan, I explore the debate raised by feminist scholars regarding the usefulness of a Lacanian orientation when confronted with issues surrounding patriarchy.

I considered that the RSI would prove a useful device when interpreting DVA: earlier in the literature review I discussed how women who experience DVA often become isolated from friends and family and so their social circle contracts or dissipates completely (see chapter 2.7). As the abusive relationship progresses their agency is eroded and ultimately removed. In consequence, the women become dependent upon their dominant partner who influences and controls many aspects of their lives, including the women's sense of self. RSI accommodated an interpretation where self-identity is not predetermined but intertwined with and influenced by Other. The Imaginary and Symbolic allow for the subject to be constituted in a fluid and malleable way. The demand made of subjugated women to placate their abuser may be seen as

broadly aligning with Lacan's notion of the Real and desire; an endless, indeterminate and ultimately futile attempt to satisfy. The concept of desire runs throughout Lacan's theory of identity and is discussed below.

4.6.3 Desire

For Lacan lack is a primary human characteristic which is essential to language, the Symbolic is characterised through this desire and lacking (Lacan, 2004). Desire, however, is not easily accessed it is concealed and confused with a wish: whereas a wish is conscious, desire is borne of the unconscious (Bailly, 2012). Desire, it is argued, should be differentiated from drive:

Desire is grounded in its constitutive lack, while drive circulates around a hole, a gap in the order of being. In other words, the circular movement of drive obeys the weird logic of the curved space in which the shortest distance between the two points is not a straight line, but a curve: drive "knows" that the shortest way to attain its aim is to circulate around its goal-object (Žižek, 2009, p. 63).

This striving for desire, this lacking is essential to existence in the Symbolic and Imaginary but also within the notion of the Real. It is on the basis of this understanding of identity through the RSI that Lacan positioned desire as a key tenet of his work when he proclaimed '[m]an's desire is the desire of other' (Lacan, 2004, p. 38). According to Lacan desire is a condition rather than an affect (Bailly, 2012). Desire pushes for recognition and individuals depend on others for recognition – it structures both their desires and their drives. Desire incorporates not only an individual's own desire but also what the other desires. What we experience as being our own desire will always be intertwined with the other that we desire recognition from (Hewitson, 2010). In this instance, the other is the individual's counterpart, whereas Lacan also spoke of the Other as the wider or big Other which exists as a more 'Otherly' other such as cultural norms, morals or social codes. Lacan distinguished between other/*Object Petit a (autre)* and Other/the *Grande Autre* (Lacan, 2004). The former is a projection of the ego from the Mirror Stage and so in the Imaginary, whereas the latter is accessed through language and law and so the Symbolic. In this way, speech equates to demand in that it presupposes the other to whom it is addressed; that which comes from the Other is not satisfaction but a response to the individual's need (Lacan, 2004). The paradox then is this: people never know

precisely what or why the Other desires, or how they may be complicit with that desire. Desire of the Other may be framed as a desire for what the individual perceives the Other to desire or lack. Individuals never simply desire, they identify and shape desire by reference to what they perceive others desire, so that desire is only ever experienced as ‘desire in the Second degree’ (Hewitson, 2010, p. 2). This notion of desire is pivotal for Lacan, it represents a never-ending quest for satisfaction, a quest which is futile. It is ‘...a function central to all human experience, is the desire for nothing nameable. And at the same time this desire lies at the origin of every variety of animation’ (Lacan, 1988, p. 228). Žižek expressed it in this way: ‘we don’t really know what we think we desire’ (Media broadcast: Žižek, 2014).

The concepts explored above present a compendium of Lacanian thought as it relates to my study. In the section below I explore how a marriage between Lacanian thought and feminism may be achieved.

4.7 Lacanian theory and feminist thought

As schools of thought both psychoanalysis and feminism encompass wide-ranging species which take divergent theoretical and political issues as their focus (Campbell, 2004). Certain species of Lacanian scholars have regarded feminism as ‘a dangerous, if not impossible’ (Campbell, 2004, p. 25) attempt to account for sexual difference. Psychoanalysis has presented a quandary for feminist thinkers, who have long debated it as a means of knowing (Butler, 1990). Some feminist thinkers approach psychoanalysis with caution, wary of the power the analysis may hold and may assert over the subject (Irigaray, 1991). Devoting a chapter of the *Second Sex* to the psychoanalytic view, De Beauvoir forwards her critique with an acknowledgement that ‘It is not an easy matter to discuss psychoanalysis *per se*. Like all religions - Christianity and Marxism, for example - it displays an embarrassing flexibility on the basis of rigid concepts’ (De Beauvoir, 1988, p. 70).

Many feminist critiques of psychoanalytic discourse have denounced Freud’s primacy of the biological, the phallus and penis envy as being contrary and even offensive to feminist thought (Butler, 1990; Zakin, 2011). Scholars have argued that this emphasis on the pre determination of the biological has sought to convince women to conspire in their own subjugation (Friedan, 1983). According to De Beauvoir if women do envy men at all, it is not because of any anatomical superiority but rather their covert male social power and privilege (De Beauvoir, 1988). Against this backdrop many feminist thinkers have been hostile towards the work of Lacan; Grosz describing him as ‘one of

the most controversial figures within contemporary feminist theory' (Grosz, 2002, p. 147). For Lacan, it is argued, women will always be outside the kinship which unites and binds all men, they will be resigned to be Other (Butler, 1990). Further, Lacan's reliance on structural determinism removes agency and naturalises women's oppression thus compromising their politics and struggle for change (Fraser, 1992; Zakin, 2011). Stanley and Wise elucidate further when they aver that Lacan's writings on identity are the antitheses to the feminist ontology, where self is constructed as 'relational, collective and collaborative' (Stanley & Wise, 2002, p. 209). Others condemn his work as being elitist, androcentric and phallogentric (Grosz, 2002; Tong, 2013). It is argued that for Lacan 'the female subject is always in question' (Assiter, 2005, p. 42): she lacks the phallus and is thereby excluded from the Symbolic. Elaborating on the phallogentric, Luce Irigaray, akin to Lacan positions sexual difference as being ascribed through language. Biology, she suggests is culturally influenced through the Imaginary (Irigaray, 1985b). Irigaray, however, departs from Lacan arguing that in Western cultures men's access to philosophy, religion and metaphysics have been founded on a male biased system of representation (symbols, the Imaginary and language). Within such Western cultures women are without subjectivity 'the feminine cannot signify itself in any proper meaning, proper name, or concept not even that of woman' (Irigaray, 1985b, p. 155). Women are 'consistently found lacking and defective as a result of this unchallenged algorithm' (Coleman, 2009, p. 126). So that women are defined from man as the 'not man' which must be replaced if women are to come into fruition (Irigaray, 1985a). According to Irigaray the knowledge produced from such philosophies disclose a 'blind spot' which preserves and reproduces a system which privileges the male and male concepts. In this way phallogentrism or homologation:

...preserves the reproduction of culture in the image of a masculine morphology – a morphology sculpted and sustained through techniques of identification and attachment which institute a self-predicated upon the denigration of otherness; or, specifically, an otherness which has been attributed a feminine gender (Pottage, 1994-1995, p. 1167).

It is argued that the Lacanian Symbolic Order promotes phallogentrism, the male viewed as both superior and the standard measure. The feminine maybe be represented but only in relation to the male, so that 'there can be no subject without an Other' (Butler, 1990, p. 326). Through her work Irigaray sought to challenge and transpose the Other not as an outsider but by positioning 'the repressed other, the

woman, the feminine' (Assiter, 2005, p. 43) within. In this way Irigaray challenged Lacan's notion of the Mirror Stage. She contended that self-reflection is one dimensional, a mirror can only ever reflect the masculine subject; women have no representation only lack and deficiency (Irigaray, 1985a). Whilst deploying psychoanalytical techniques herself Irigaray remained critical of psychoanalysis averring that *inter alia* it operates outside an historical and temporal frame of reference (Assiter, 2005). Adopting a more conciliatory approach, other academics have queried how psychoanalysis and which psychoanalysis can provide a better theory for politics (Butler, Laclau, & Žižek, 2000). Mitchell is amongst these contemporary scholars who have taken a less defensive position, averring that psychoanalysis is a feminist collaborator when it positions sexual oppression and liberation within the psyche (Grosz, 2002; Mitchell, 2008). Lacan's emphasis on the structural, the notion that identity is constructed, has been regarded as positively moving the debate away from the biological, a concept which some feminist thinkers find offensive (Assiter, 2005). Feminist scholar Luepnitz suggests that for Lacan 'there is nothing missing from the Real of the female body. Lack is something that exists in the Imaginary register; [castration] is operative for everyone' (Luepnitz, 2002, p. 227). Our experience of language is a cut into the Imaginary. Women, like men, undergo a form of castration as they enter the Symbolic. The subject is bound into the Symbolic order while the ego cannot escape its Imaginary origin. The lack is 'an ever-present gap between what we intend to say, and what is actually said' (Hook, 2006, p. 69). In this way, the phallus - is both a signifier of desire and signifier of lack, producing a paradox in which our desire to be complete (Imaginary) is frustrated by a lack that needs to be 'covered'. Within the Symbolic the Phallus is not a series of images, or a thing but more a position which can come to represent many different things, such as wealth, achievement or even children as phallic accomplishments (Hook, 2006).

Within the Imaginary, the phallus is an object that the child cannot reach, does not have, something lacking that cannot ever satisfy the Mother's desire. Within the Symbolic order, it is a signifier of the Other's desire which can be an infinite number of things.

Lacan's proposition that identification is formed as a result of influences (psychological and cultural) during childhood development offers a universality of application which may be considered as not incompatible with feminist thought (Mitchell, 1974). Evans elucidates:

The force of psychoanalysis is therefore precisely that it gives an account of patriarchal culture as a trans-historical and cross-cultural force. It therefore conforms to the feminist demand for a theory which can explain women's subordination across specific times and different historical moments (Evans, 2001, p. 309).

According to Mitchell psychoanalysis seeks to analyse as opposed to prescribe a patriarchy. She goes on to caution that a rejection of psychoanalysis is 'fatal for feminism...if we are interested in understanding and challenging the oppression of women, we cannot afford to neglect it' (Mitchell, 2008, p. 15).

Within this discourse of compromise, Campbell promotes coalition between feminist thought and Lacanian theory. A narrative whereby there is no marriage but rather an 'appropriation':

My engagement with Lacanian theory takes up this contemporary narrative of 'productive appropriation'. It was what this particular psychoanalytic account does, or fails to do, for a specific feminist problematic. My question does not concern a possible union of feminism/psychoanalysis, but a specific engagement of feminist and Lacanian epistemology (Campbell, 2004, p. 27).

There is no attempt at a union between feminist thought and Lacanian theory to be found within in this study. The two are, however, interwoven; at times they jar and grate whilst at other junctures they run side-by-side. In this project, I have sought to take and engage with only certain aspects of Lacanian thought. It has been appropriated as a means of interpreting my data. A number of Lacan's concepts have been difficult to position within the context of my study, however, I considered that such an orientation would allow me to move away from interpretations of DVA which were mainly patriarchy led. I do not reject such an interpretation but by adopting a Lacanian orientation another approach could be contemplated where patriarchy could be regarded as a thread within the complex web which forms DVA; a phenomenon which I felt motivated to explore and probe further within this framework.

As far as I am able to determine although others have sought to position emotional abuse within a Lacanian framework (Shaw, 2005), a Lacanian analysis which encompasses DVA is academically novel. I found this both appealing and energising; whilst presenting my research at a local University, the Professor convenor spoke of a

current fashion for ‘conveyor belt’ PhDs whereby research students superficially engaged with both theory and their research topic. I recalled these words at several stages of my research but never more so than when I turned to Lacan as a means to explain my data. Had I ever been journeying on the conveyor belt, then this innovative approach allowed me, with some trepidation, to step off and carve a pathway through uncharted territory. Through a Lacanian orientation, I have endeavoured to produce both a creative and constructive interpretation of my data and so seek to unravel the nuances and complexities of living in an abusive relationship. My project has sought to deliver a meaningful and well considered encounter between these seemingly vying frameworks.

4.8 A reflective note

The Lacanian lens adopted in this study, opened up the possibilities through which DVA might be theorized. My application of the RSI was novel and initially I was unable to appreciate how it would operate to illuminate the women’s accounts. Working within this frame was challenging at times, nonetheless, once I had conceptualised the RSI within DVA it was ubiquitous: readily transferrable across a range of abusive behaviours. Such a discovery was stimulating as the RSI offered original insights into the men’s behaviours and the women’s responses. The model was, however, also unsatisfactory when at times it operated in ways which I considered restrictive and even repetitious. Once this thesis was almost completed, with introspection I reflected that there was scope of a wider application of the Lacanian frame to DVA. I responded to this realisation by revisiting the analysis and discussion chapters (see chapters seven, eight, nine and ten) and peppering them with a limited number of footnotes. These footnotes were deployed as a means of highlighting how future scholars might constructively expand the use of Lacanian thought by mapping sport as a culturally significant and ultimately unobtainable representation of the phallic.

In the following chapter I go on to present a discussion of my research design; providing an explanation and justification for the methods I employed.

Chapter Five: Methods

5.1 Structure of Chapter

This chapter flows from the last where I presented a detailed discussion of the philosophical foundations which have orientated this study. In the first section of this chapter I outline the data collection framework; a qualitative strategy was utilised and this is discussed together with issues surrounding the requirement to produce rigorous research and reflexivity. In the second part of this chapter I present a discussion of how I planned and carried out this research. It includes but is not limited to ethical considerations, the relationship between the researcher and participants, negotiating access, issues pertaining to consent and confidentiality and the use of semi-structured interviews. Throughout the chapter I highlight how my methodological approach, outlined above (see chapter four), served to underpin and inform the decisions I made.

5.2 Data collection framework

It is suggested quantitative research strategies take numerical and statistical data as its focus, whereas qualitative research seeks to ‘understand phenomena within their own context’ (Gray, 2013, p. 164). A qualitative strategy allows the researcher to gather, organise and interpret information using their eyes and ears as filters (Lichtman, 2010). The researcher seeks to gain a deep, intense, ‘holistic’ overview of the research topic which often includes individuals, groups and communities (Gray, 2013). Further aligning with my ontological orientation, qualitative researchers are less inclined (than quantitative researchers) to seek ‘the truth’ (Westmarland, 2001, p. 10); appreciating that understandings may be extended when account is taken of both the knower and the location of the knowers. In this way qualitative research has, at its core, an ‘interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of experience’ (Seidman, 2012, p. 3). The connection between qualitative research and the gathering of information about individuals’ lived experience is thus easily observed. Qualitative research may be useful in circumstances where little is known of a phenomenon or to gain alternative perspectives, so that new and unanticipated data may emerge (Gray, 2013). Unlike quantitative research strategies, the researcher is not hidden but visible and appreciated as ‘a marvellously smart, adaptable, flexible instrument’ (Seidman, 2012, p. 16) who is able to react with skill and understanding to situations which present themselves in the process. Reflexivity which is addressed later in this section is, therefore, key as both the researcher and the researched are seen to contribute to the

data. The putting of the researcher in the process allows for an emphasis to be placed on a more equal relationship within the research process (Oakley, 1981; Stanley & Wise, 2002).

FSE, which takes as its tenet the imbalance of power within the research process has been strongly aligned with qualitative methods (O'Shaughnessy & Krogman, 2012), which have been 'lauded in feminist research for allowing women to address questions that matter most in their lives in a manner that respects their values, knowledge and subjectivity' (O'Shaughnessy & Krogman, 2012, p. 495). Qualitative methods are viewed as being 'sensitive to women's experiences, seen in their own terms, and as empowering women in their efforts to work for change' (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1992, p. 17). In the context of my research it was the women who took part and their experiences of DVA which were central. I concluded that a qualitative research method was compatible with my philosophical underpinnings. It was, moreover, well suited to my aim of exploring the women's detailed accounts whilst respecting and empowering them as knowers to promote an understanding of the phenomenon of DVA. This route further accorded with my ontological standpoint regarding the contested nature of truth.

Qualitative research is, however, not without its critics who suggest that it is 'merely anecdotal or at best illustrative' (Mason, 2002, p. 2). They dismiss it as unstructured (Gray, 2013). As such, 'doctoral candidates [utilising qualitative methods]...may have to fight a stiffer battle to establish themselves as credible' (Seidman, 2012, p. 6). Further, feminist researchers have warned against a dichotomy being created where quantitative research is equated with 'positivism, objectivity, and masculinity' whilst qualitative methods are seen to be associated with 'interpretivism, non-scientific, subjectivity and femininity' (Westmarland, 2001, p. 1).

Later (see chapter 5.8), I present a discussion about my use of semi-structured interviews. It is pertinent, however, to address at this stage the issues surrounding the production of rigorous research.

5.3 Fidelity within the research process

Qualitative research has been open to criticism that 'it is unscientific anecdotal and based on subjective impressions' (Gray, 2013, p. 189); rigor and transparency are lacking, credentials which have hitherto been valued in traditional positivist ways of knowing (Bryman, 2012). Without a measure of reliability and credibility it is argued analytical procedures and findings may be dismissed as personal opinions subject to

researcher bias (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2008). Whilst qualitative scholars may agree that there must be an evaluation, there is disagreement how this might be achieved. By its very nature qualitative research contemplates shifting multiple realities, where the researcher is visible and there is a transparency in the research process, so that any measure must itself be 'flexible, unstructured and open to amendment' (O'Reilly & Kiyimba, 2015, p. 29). As such, it is argued that qualitative research, should be judged on its own terms which 'must be responsive and adaptable to changing circumstances, holistic, having processional immediacy, sensitivity, and ability for clarification and summarization' (Morse et al., 2008, p. 14).

Amongst the views adopted some scholars, whilst accepting that credence must be assured (Seidman, 2012), have taken as their focus new criteria by which qualitative research might be measured. Guba and Lincoln were at the fore-front of this debate (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Poortman & Schildkamp, 2012). They proposed a concept of 'trustworthiness' suggesting that the qualitative researcher should adhere to four principles identified as creditability, validity, dependability and conformability (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The notion that such terms can be transposed between contesting paradigms is, however, considered problematic. It is argued that validity is a realist concept, which presupposes that research is a linear process, based on an assumption that a truth is waiting to be discovered (O'Reilly & Kiyimba, 2015). In this way validity raises questions about the unitary nature of truth 'on to which facts become un problematically mapped is contested' (O'Reilly & Kiyimba, 2015, p. 30). It is further argued that by its very nature qualitative research, which is concerned with the richness of human experience, dictates that reliability through replication is unachievable (Seidman, 2012). Whilst the debate ensues, it is argued that qualitative researchers broadly agree that the three markers of transparency, reflexivity and trustworthiness may be used to promote rigour (O'Reilly & Kiyimba, 2015). I provide below, some examples, which serve to illustrate elements embedded throughout this study promoting research which may be considered rigorous.

As detailed further below, this study was approved by the Faculty of Education and Children's Services' Ethics Committee at the University of Chester (see appendix two). The application and adherence to an externally ratified ethical framework signified that the study was ethical, credible and reliable in its execution. The data collection could be described as being broadly uniform because the format of semi-structured interviews represented a consistent approach (Bryman, 2012). Ethically, respondent validation although having its limits, has been recognised as a means of reducing the risk of misinterpreting the participant (Richards & Schwartz, 2002). In my study,

such a course was not practicable as the women who took part in this study were anonymous often even to myself and many were transient. For both ethical and practical reasons, which included protecting their safety and anonymity, the research plan did not incorporate any element of validation by the women. It was important that as far as possible, their accounts were not misrepresented - a risk which is arguably increased when a researcher is working alone (Richards & Schwartz, 2002). I conducted all the interviews and later transcribed them myself, a course which reduced the likelihood of inaccuracy (see appendix three). This was particularly so because several of the women had very strong local accents, and having met the women in person I was able to better 'tune in' to their dialects for transcription purposes. I checked and rechecked the transcripts against the recordings for errors. I had regular meetings with my supervisory team throughout this process. During the analysis phase, such contact provided a means through which I could candidly discuss and debate the data, so that there was an open dialogue and transparency surrounding my analysis. This thesis contains numerous references to the women who took part which served to keep them visible in this process. Issues of power and authority of the researcher arise regarding the selection of extracts, however, the thesis incorporates numerous quotes by the women which has lent credence to the meaning I have ascribed to their accounts. These quotes were further highlighted in the presentations I made thus providing an additional means by which my use of the data could be scrutinized. Finally, I left a clear audit trail throughout the project regarding the processes I have employed. This course has promoted reflexivity in that I had to give an honest account and record of the steps I had taken. It further provided a transparency and openness about the decisions I made and how they were executed.

One of the fundamental characteristics of qualitative research is reflexivity, which requires the researcher to situate themselves in the process, exposing an awareness of self and one's own assumptions. In doing so they demonstrate an engagement with 'the cultural and social embeddedness of the methods, theories and research questions' (O'Reilly & Kiyimba, 2015, p. 101). Reflexivity is discussed in detail below in the following section.

5.4 Reflexivity

The researcher is not a neutral subject in the construction of knowledge (Gray, 2013); but rather a creature who brings with them a degree of subjective interpretation borne of traits such as emotions, status, ethnicity, age and gender. As Stanley and Wise remind us 'research is a process which occurs through the medium of a person - the

researcher is always and inevitably present in the research. This exists whether openly stated or not' (Stanley & Wise, 2002, p. 186).

Generally the qualitative researcher recognises that it is preferable to accept these socially and culturally grounded positions and the impact they may have on the research process than to assume they can overcome them (Westmarland, 2001). This reflexive process, intertwined with ethics, presents a continuing duty on the researcher to self-reflect and evaluate how their subjectivity influences each stage of the search process (Dowling, 2007). The process is fluid and ongoing as the researcher creates interpretations whilst actively questioning the manner in which those interpretations have been conceived (Lavery, 2008). A course which subtly reframes the dynamics between the researcher and participants which may serve to deepen understandings (Finlay & Payman, 2013). This duty upon qualitative researchers to be reflexive, aligns with the epistemological values required of me working through a FSE lens; such a framework demands that the researcher is recognised and accounted for (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002; Stanley & Wise, 2002). This acknowledgment of the researcher as a participant seeks, as far as is possible, to address and emolliate any perceived imbalance of power within the research process (Berger, 2015; Daley, 2010).

In the context of this thesis my subjectivity commenced with the identification of my research topic. It permeated every stratum of this project: reviewing the literature which I considered to be useful, through to the data collection and analysis. To better my self-awareness, I opened a project journal and made detailed entries particularly during my fieldwork; by way of example I would often sit in my car after a meeting with gatekeepers or an interview and record my immediate responses and feelings. This course allowed me to capture the detail and emotion during my fieldwork. It further permitted me to expose and interrogate myself and my position (Finlay & Payman, 2013). The journal formed the basis of my electronic diary records which I updated after each contact with gatekeepers or women who took part. Re-reading the journal prompted memories which were valuable at several stages of my project but proved especially useful during the composition of the pen portraits and at the stages of data analysis. This journal, both the keeping of it and referencing back to it, kept me close to my experiences and the data as time elapsed. Finally my decision to write up my study in the first person and include abstracts from my journal where appropriate made me, as the researcher, visible in this process (Brown, Western, & Pascal, 2013). Throughout this chapter where appropriate I highlight a variety of examples, which are not exhaustive, to demonstrate how reflexivity was exercised throughout this project.

In the next section of this chapter I will address how this research was conducted. I explain and justify the methods I adopted in the planning and execution of this research.

5.5 Ethical considerations

Ethics have been described as ‘...the morality of human conduct’ (Edwards & Mauthner, 2012, p. 4). Early on in my PhD I attended a workshop on ethics. The facilitator advised that ethics should be central to our research, she used the simile of a thesis being a stick of rock which if broken in half would say ‘ethics’ all the way through. This simile remained with me as I strived to recognise and comply with my ethical obligations. Prior to conducting any fieldwork my study design was submitted to the Faculty of Education and Children’s Services Ethics Committee at the University of Chester. My Ethics application was approved in February 2014 (see appendix two). The granting of my application to the ethics committee represented the beginning of my ethical journey. Ethical committees are relatively new, although, ethics are not, as Kant stated ‘[a]ct so that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of another, always as an end and never as a means only’ (Kant as cited in Guyer, 2004, p. 64).

As a researcher influenced by FSE, ethics were pivotal to both the design and implementation of my study (Hesse-Biber, 2013a). The World Health Organization has described the significant and complex ethical dilemmas which may arise in research involving the sensitive issue of violence against women (World Health Organization, 2001). It is suggested that such sensitive research ‘sharpens ethical dilemmas and tends to reveal the limits of existing ethical theories’ (Lee & Renzetti, 1990, p. 522). Whilst rejecting the notion of a hierarchy, the proposition that ethical issues are important in research concerning DVA has credence, as the repercussions of poorly planned and executed research can expose both the participant and researcher to significant physical and emotional risk (Elcioglu et al., 2004). The nature of my topic further demanded the primacy of ethical considerations at all stages of this study. As the current chapter develops, I put in context when and how my ethical commitments translated into practice.

5.6 Gatekeepers and access

Gaining access has been described as a ‘political process’ where negotiation and re-negotiation are key (Bryman, 2012, p. 151). The process demands of the researcher

time, patience and energy (Lees, 1996). Gaining access can be one of the ‘most difficult challenges when conducting interviews [relating to DVA]’ (Baird & Mitchell, 2014, p. 23). When I started my project, I was anxious about the prospect of gaining access and as it transpired I was right to be so. In accordance with my obligation to remain reflexive, I kept a detailed diary of my experiences during fieldwork. In this journal I recorded not only the mechanical details of the process of access but also the hurdles I faced. Within this chapter, where appropriate, I have included excerpts from that diary. Many of my experiences gained through the process of negotiating access became an important resource when I sought to understand and explain my data (May, 2011).

The term ‘gatekeepers’ has been utilised to refer to those who are in a position to permit or refuse access to the field of study (Lofland & Lofland, 1984). In my instance the gatekeepers were the organizations who would permit me access to their service users who had experienced DVA. I have an academic interest in DVA and professional experience of this phenomenon, however, I considered myself an outsider in terms of the arena I sought to occupy. I recognised that to participate I had to be accepted on some level, by moving into this research space both analytically and personally (David & Sutton, 2007). I employed two strategies to identify potential gatekeepers. The first of these strategies involved obtaining the advice and guidance of those who occupied the research space I sought to access (David & Sutton, 2007, 2011; May, 2011). As a preliminary to my fieldwork I met with, amongst others, the local authority/council domestic abuse coordinators whose remit included the physical locations where I would carry out my fieldwork. I met them in person, explained my project and asked for their assistance in identifying potential gatekeepers. In both phases the coordinators were very interested in my work, happy to provide me with the names and other details of gatekeepers who may be willing to support my study. They further agreed that I could use them as a point of reference in my introductory emails; this permitted me to build up relevant connections and so begin to move into the research space I sought to occupy (David & Sutton, 2007; Pole & Lampard, 2002). My second strategy was a broader approach whereby I carried out a systematic internet search to ascertain the details of potential gatekeepers. Once such an organization had been identified, I obtained the direct email address of those within the organization who were in a position to permit access - most commonly the refuge manager or director of services - who I then contacted by email. It is suggested that negotiations regarding access may be multi-layered there maybe power relations within any given setting (Bryman, 2012; May, 2011). I hoped that by directing my email to a named individual, who had authority to permit access, I would avoid some layers of authority where my

request might get misdirected or lost (Pole & Lampard, 2002). I followed up my first email with a second inviting the recipient to meet me to discuss my research further. If any response was to be elicited, and sometimes none were, it was usually this second email which triggered an answer. I kept detailed records and was methodical in my approach as I appreciated that this initial contact was vital in promoting my research and the cultivation of a relationship with the gatekeepers (David & Sutton, 2007).

In view of the sensitive nature of my research it was important to build up a relationship of mutual trust with the gatekeepers (Baird & Mitchell, 2014). It is perhaps unsurprising that those working in the field of domestic violence are often apprehensive about agreeing to accommodate research, being 'extremely sensitive to being used or exploited by others including academics' (Abrahams, 2007, p. 134). To avoid such an impression, it was key to establish and maintain an open dialogue. To facilitate this mutual trust I invited the gatekeepers to meet me face-to-face (Hesse-Biber, 2013b; Hoff, 1988). These meetings availed the gatekeepers of an opportunity to evaluate my integrity and interrogate my credentials. It further allowed them to identify whether my research could benefit their organization either directly or indirectly. This meeting was also important on a more personal level in that the gatekeepers could form an opinion whether I was someone with whom they could work (Abrahams, 2007). For my part I was able to form an assessment of the gatekeepers and the services they offered. The meetings provided me with an opportunity to clarify what would be involved, should they decide to support my project. It was important from my own perspective, but also from the perspective of the gatekeepers, that we were able to discuss fully my ethical obligations for example I would require the interviews to take place in a private room at a location where ongoing support for the women was available. It was necessary to reinforce these commitments because several of the gatekeepers complained they were very busy, chronically underfunded and under-resourced; it was clear when I visited many premises that space and resources were at a premium. This stretching of resources increased my gratitude for their willingness to engage in my research. The meetings acted as a mutual interview process; the following passage from my research diary describes my first meeting with a potential gatekeeper in Phase 1:

I waited in a meeting room. It was a bright and homely room: colourful posters challenging domestic violence adorned the walls and leaflets and flyers stacked up on chairs alongside a kettle and mugs. I was joined by the community team manager; a woman (in her mid-fifties at a guess) stout and matronly, although a woman of warmth she commanded a

presence. She was extremely professional; she had printed off and had with her all the emails I had sent. She was calm and asked careful questions and listened intently to my answers, she was clearly very interested in what I was doing. She struck me as someone in whom you could readily confide. I felt happy and relaxed when I spoke to her. There was something about her which could only be described as 'safe'. She agreed that I could visit the refuge (on another site) and also attend an outreach group to promote my work (Research diary May 2014).

In phase 1 I met all three gatekeepers who subsequently agreed to support my research. In phase 2 I met six of the seven gatekeepers who supported my research. The one gatekeeper I did not meet had not been identified in the manner described above. They had been recommended and introduced via email by a former colleague. This organization is very well-known and respected with extensive experience facilitating academic research. We engaged in a detailed exchange of emails prior to any commitment on either side, and in the circumstances, I was content to work with them despite the absence of a face-to-face meeting.

Bryman reasons that access does not finish when the researcher has been admitted to a group because 'you still need access to people' (Bryman, 2012, p. 439). Once the gatekeepers had agreed to support my study, I provided them with copies of the flyers (see appendix one) and the participant information sheets (see appendix four) which they agreed to circulate/display. Ethically it was very important that such information about my study was available to the women at any early stage so that they could make a considered and informed decision whether or not to take part. To promote an understanding of my study and what participation would entail the gatekeepers all agreed that I would be given an opportunity to explain my research personally to groups of women who accessed their services through gatherings such as support groups and coffee mornings. When initially I met the gatekeepers they had all been very enthusiastic about my research, however, as time progressed it became apparent that this enthusiasm would not always translate into practice. Some of the organizations did little or nothing to facilitate my access to their service users. Pole and Lampard argue that in this way some gatekeepers operate subtle exclusion; whereby they retain ultimate control over the research project (Pole & Lampard, 2002). My experience of such exclusion is revealed in the following excerpt from my diary recorded after a visit to a refuge in Phase 1:

When I arrived for the house meeting I was 'pinged' through the electric gates into the premises; I was then 'buzzed' through into reception. A lady who looked far more frazzled than her smiling professional photograph on the wall, met me and escorted me through to the house meeting and I did my spiel. About a dozen women sat in their pyjamas (it was 10.30am on a hot summer's day). They texted on their phones, they flipped through magazines, they ate the biscuits I had taken and one person just randomly giggled throughout. It was soul destroying and it was embarrassing. The staff member then told the women not to make any decisions without speaking to their outreach worker... 'Slam, bam down come the shutters' I thought. I was quickly escorted from the room and off the premises. I returned to my car and sat and felt thoroughly depressed; where was I going wrong in my approach? (Research Diary: July 2014).

When I arrived home I emailed the staff member and thanked them for the opportunity they had provided for me to speak to the women at their refuge. I quickly suggested another date to attend and did so a month later:

It was the same format, 'pinged' and 'buzzed' in. Do my spiel; ignored by women in pyjamas. The women were told not to do anything rash. I was escorted out of room and off premises. I felt an idiot, not least because I had just humiliated myself for the second time in front of some of the same women (including the random giggler). I timed the experience. It had taken me just under two hours to get to the premises and I was away from my car for 10 minutes exactly. What a disheartening experience. As I reflect my cynical side wonders whether partaking in research is a tick box on a form somewhere and I facilitated a tick (Research Diary: August 2014).

Unsurprisingly, no women from this organization participated in this research. I encountered this feeling of exclusion once again in Phase 2 when a director of services who had been very positive in our meeting later reneged on her promise by failing to circulate my details to her colleagues. When she eventually did so, the muted tone of her colleagues' responses led me to conclude that I had been caught up in a political angst, the type of which Bryman had described (Bryman, 2012). When later reflecting on these experiences I concluded that whilst negotiating access with those in authority

had clear benefits in that it ensured a direct route to the decision maker, it was problematic. This course took no account of the role of those lower down the organization who would ultimately act as a filter for access. As Pettigrew cautions 'inevitably any fieldworker can only know of what is going on around him or her, what she or he can fortunately observe and only so much as people are willing to yield up to him or her' (Pettigrew, 1981, p. 68).

It is important to note that the experiences mentioned above were exceptional and the remaining gatekeepers were welcoming and very generous with both their time and resources. I was often made to feel as 'one of the team' and was provided with or encouraged to make my own hot drink and stay on the premises for as long as I wished. I always took biscuits, cakes or fruit on my visits to gatekeeper's premises and these were really appreciated. I valued these visits and often took the opportunity to chat to staff and service users alike. I felt privileged to be included and welcomed their genuine interest and enthusiasm for my project. These encounters are amongst my most memorable and enjoyable during my PhD. After the data collection had been completed, some of the gatekeepers asked that I keep them abreast of my studies. I had the pleasure of limited ongoing contact, intermittently updating them on my progress.

5.7 Recruitment

I will now provide an explanation of how I set about recruiting women to take part in this study. As outlined previously, all my contact with the women was informed by my feminist led ethical obligations. I met each of the women through the gatekeepers: organizations the women trusted and their premises an accepted place of safety (World Health Organization, 2001). The gatekeepers permitted me to attend gatherings of service users such as house meetings and coffee mornings with residents. In respect of non-residents I attended support groups and friendship groups. In addition, I attended several meetings where the women were completing the Freedom Programme: a national information project designed as group intervention for those who have or are experiencing domestic abuse. The course usually runs for about twelve weeks with the aim of providing service users with knowledge they can use to protect themselves and their families from DVA (Craven, 2008). My regular visits built up a mutual relationship of trust with the gatekeepers (Baird & Mitchell, 2014). They reassured me that women were being made aware of my research and on more than one occasion I took the opportunity to pin up my flyers (see appendix one) on a notice board or otherwise make them more visible in communal areas.

There was written information at the gatekeepers' premises about my research, however, the informal meetings with the service users provided a collaborative environment where I was able to take time to explain my research face-to-face (Abrahams, 2007). The meeting also availed the women of an opportunity to ask me questions in a safe space (Btoush & Campbell, 2009). I often stayed on the premises after these group meetings had finished so that women could independently and privately, approach me regarding taking part in this research. I really wanted women to take part in my research but refrained from sounding desperate, a course which was made more difficult as often women mentioned that they could relate to my research and had relevant experiences, however, in the same breath they quickly rejected any notion that they would be willing to be interviewed. It was imperative that I did not put any undue pressure on the women (Baird & Mitchell, 2014). I was acutely aware of my duty with regards to 'not overtly influencing participation' by either my words or body language (Fontes, 2004, p. 147). I did not query or challenge such decisions, this at times proved very frustrating, but I tried to keep my disappointment to myself. Much has been written about the researcher's power within research (for example: DeVault, 1990; Finch, 2004; Oakley, 1981), however, at times I felt that the balance of power was (as it should have been) very much with the women as the knowers. The meetings proved a sharp learning curve for me but the more I attended the more comfortable I felt talking about my research. Initially I felt out of place, an outsider or intruder. The passages below have been taken from my journal where I have recorded my sense of intrusion and the steps I took to try to resolve these feelings. These extracts highlight the importance of my research journal and my keen reflexivity at differing stages of the process:

At these premises, I had felt uncomfortable...I felt middle class and aloof. I am the former but not I hope the latter...I desperately didn't want to appear as a voyeur because that was not true (Research Journal July 2014).

Further:

[I returned to the premises to conduct the interviews]...I always, but always wear 6 silver bangles. I took them off. I took off my wedding ring, the only ring I wear. I would never countenance going to work in jeans, I wore my oldest jeans. I dress like this all the time outside work, I am scruffy. It went against the grain to go to meet someone who had agreed to give up their time in this manner. A manner I had always been told

and had accepted as irreverent. Why did I do this? For me or for them? Both I have concluded (Research Journal July 2014).

I cannot deny that by 'dressing down' I felt less conspicuous, more comfortable and more of an insider. I wanted to be as inconspicuous as I could, I wanted to listen. I felt more empathetic, because some of women had fled their homes with nothing and now wore old and ill-fitting clothes from the clothing pool. I felt I did not want to add to their indignity by turning out in a smart outfit (Research Journal July 2014).

My acts should not be misconstrued as trying to patronise or ingratiate the women, rather, I was attempting to reduce the contrast between us and so demonstrate some empathy with them.

In all aspects of planning my fieldwork, the wellbeing and safety of the women was paramount (Abrahams, 2007; World Health Organization, 2001). Those who experience DVA may be used to being controlled by others and may lack self-esteem (Campbell et al., 2010). Compatible with my FSE obligations, to the extent that it is possible to counteract power relations, I took care to accentuate the women's autonomy throughout the research process: The World Health Organization in its guidance on researching domestic violence suggests that the 'participant should feel free to reschedule (or relocate) the interview to a time (or place) that may be more safe or convenient' (World Health Organization, 2001, p. 12). Accordingly, I invited the women to choose a day and time for the interview, this was open to change and on more than one occasion the time and date were re-arranged to suit the women. The interview took place when safe and convenient, whilst accommodating the women's existing commitments, such as childcare (Btoush & Campbell, 2009; Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002; World Health Organization, 2001).

An ongoing concern for the women's welfare influenced the means and manner of all contact (Ellsberg & Heise, 2002; World Health Organization, 2001). As mentioned above, as a safeguarding measure, I intended that all the interviews would take place on refuge premises, as a safe place where ongoing support for the women was available (Abrahams, 2007). It was important that a contingency was in place should a woman become distressed, so that immediate professional help and support was available (Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen, & Liamputtong, 2008). My planning in this regard was re-visited when Lowri, one of the women who took part, made it clear that she did not want to be interviewed on refuge premises but rather at a venue nearer

her home. Her request presented me with a difficulty in reconciling her wishes with my ethical duties. Eventually I resolved the matter by renting a local community room where Lowri was attending the Freedom Programme. Lowri was involved in this planning and happy with the arrangement; with Lowri's consent I asked the gatekeeper's advice and asked them to confirm this venue was suitable and safe. Again, with Lowri's consent, I agreed that I would contact the gatekeeper as soon as the interview terminated to provide them with an update on her welfare.

Seventeen women initially agreed to take part in this research, in the event only nine women were interviewed. This discrepancy arose because some of women failed to attend for the interview at the agreed time. I had not previously considered this scenario and as such an ethical dilemma arose: to maintain the women's autonomy I did not want to query or challenge their decision not to attend, however, I wanted to confirm their safety. Further I was concerned to establish that they had decided not to participate, as opposed to simply having forgotten. In this respect, there was a practical advantage to being on the gatekeeper's premises in that they could quickly, directly and safely contact the women to clarify the position. In the event one woman, Amber, had forgotten the appointment and it was rearranged at her convenience. Despite my initial disappointment that several of the women did not keep their appointments to be interviewed, I considered nine interviews to be compatible with my epistemological foundations. My research valued what the women said as opposed to evaluating their worth via the quantity of interviews that took place. From an ethical perspective this number of participants allowed me to attend closely to the women's needs - for example a flexibility in the timings of the interviews. Finally, it became apparent at the later stages that this number of participants afforded me a greater degree of intimacy with the data at the stages of transcription and analysis.

5.8 Interview tool

Ethically, individual, private interviews are considered the most appropriate in research such as DVA (World Health Organization, 2001). Semi-structured interviews in sensitive research areas 'enable participants to reflect upon their experiences...and talk about things which are important to them' (Abrahams, 2007, p. 133) whilst ensuring that certain identified areas are covered within the interview process. It is argued that such fluidity is vital in projects such as mine where the researcher wants the ability to build freely upon and explore the participants' responses (Seidman, 2012). Semi-structured interviews were well suited to my research as they permitted the flexibility I sought without being dogmatic. Further, this less formal interview

structure supported my feminist led obligations in that it reduced the hierarchal structure with the research process (Renzetti, 1997; Stanley & Wise, 2002). For my part, initially at least, this course acted as a 'comfort blanket' informally prompting me to encompass topics which I considered important. This reflected an insecurity and apprehension in my ability which receded as my confidence grew throughout the process.

Through face-to-face interviews I was able to occupy the same space as the women (Seidman, 2012). Such interaction allowed me to respond to visual cues and to adapt to the women's presentation, in accordance with my ethical obligations and I was able to attend closely to the women's welfare. An example of this silent interaction is provided in the interview with Linda. I had been with Linda for almost an hour when she took some tobacco out of her pocket and began to roll up a cigarette. I considered this a signal to wind up the interview; I verbally acknowledged her prompt and after a few more minutes the interview was concluded. Superficially this interaction was insignificant, but on closer inspection it was an example of Linda exerting control and of an ongoing but silent negotiation of power within the interview process. There were many moments during the interviews when visual cues enhanced what was being said. I recorded these in my journal after interviews; I would return to my car and note these events and my reaction to them whilst they were still fresh in my mind.

In planning and carrying out the interviews I obeyed what Seidman has called the first commandment of interviewing: '[B]e equitable. Respect the Participant and yourself' (Seidman, 2012, p. 34). This mantra aligned with my ethical duties in that I had regard not only to 'what' questions I posed but also 'how' I posed them (Baird & Mitchell, 2014). It is argued that those who have experienced abuse are more likely to feel secure and comfortable in making their disclosures when the interviewer has paid attention to the language they adopt (Campbell et al., 2010; Ellsberg, Heise, Peña, Agurto, & Winkvist, 2001; Fontes, 2004). In response I avoided language which could be construed as judgemental, blaming or stigmatizing (Baird & Mitchell, 2014; Campbell et al., 2010; World Health Organization, 2001) and approached the interviews with an openness of dialogue, warmth and respect (DeVault, 1990). By way of example I avoided using terms such as 'rape' or 'violence' and instead I invited the women to describe their experiences. At the end of each interview I made a positive comment of thanks and appreciation, so that the women understood their contribution had been valued (Elcioglu et al., 2004). My thanks were reciprocated. It had not been the intention of this research to be cathartic for those who took part and such a claim would be wholly misguided, however, all the women who did take part

thanked me with real sincerity for showing an interest in their stories. Akin to other feminist researchers I felt that the women had an 'intangible sense of pride at having worked on the research' (Abrahams, 2007, p. 134) and demonstrated a genuine interest in my project.

At one stage in my research, I was asked by a group of women at a support group if I would consider holding a focus group. In this section, I briefly explain why I discarded and then subsequently reconsidered this research tool. A focus group has been described as an interview with a group of people, they often address group dynamics and generate opinions (Bryman, 2012; David & Sutton, 2011). It is argued that focus groups can be consistent with feminist methods and may play a valuable part in such research (Bryman, 2012; Hesse-Biber, 2013b; Wilkinson, 1999). For example, it is suggested that such a method may be particularly advantageous in feminist research concerning marginalised groups (Smithson, 2008). My initial concern was that this research tool was incompatible with my research aims in that a group setting would divert from the richness of individual accounts (Bryman, 2012; Gray, 2013; Oates, 2000). I was further mindful of the World Health Organization guidance that face-to-face, individual private meetings, are appropriate in cases of DVA (World Health Organization, 2001). Thus, the suitability of focus groups to sensitive research topics such as DVA remains controversial (Munday, 2013). Allied with this debate I was concerned that revelations made in a group setting may leave women in a compromising position. I therefore rejected this means of data collection as being suited to my sensitive research topic. I was forced, however, to revisit this decision during my fieldwork when the leader of a friendship group spontaneously asked if the group could chat about my research topic and I could record their interaction. My initial response was that by facilitating a focus group I would be extending my research and empowering the women with decision making about the means of participation; these benefits would mediate, to some degree, my anxiety about using focus groups (Smithson, 2008). I was aware that from an ethical standpoint the group had not had time to discuss this proposition, one person had made this proposal without consulting the group and as such freedom and partiality of the group had possibly been usurped and a hierarchy had been established (Munday, 2013). I reflected on the matter, and conscious that my ethics application had been in respect of private interviews, I queried with the Chair of Ethics Committee whether it would be necessary, were I to pursue focus groups, for me to refer my application. I was fortunate enough to receive an almost immediate reply that a reconsideration of my application was not necessary (see appendix five). In fact, the matter resolved: when I contacted the gatekeeper with a view to meeting the friendship group to discuss the

option of a focus group I was informed that the group had temporarily disbanded. I did not pursue the matter further. This reconsideration of my ethical positioning, serves as an example of the ethically reflexive position I adopted throughout the study (O'Reilly & Kiyimba, 2015).

5.9 Consent and anonymity

In accordance with the World Health Organization guidance, consent and anonymity were core to my ethical duties (World Health Organization, 2001). This aspect was initially broached orally at the group meeting with potential participants. My responsibilities in this regard were reiterated in the participant information sheet which the women were invited to read (and I offered to read to them) before each interview (see appendix four). The women were guaranteed that their confidentiality and anonymity would, subject to proviso, be respected at all stages of the research process (World Health Organization, 2001). To ensure anonymity the women were invited to adopt a pseudonym of their choice for use during the process. This course aligned with both my epistemic and ethical obligations; seeking to negate or at least address any perceived power imbalance between myself, as the researcher, and the women (Hesse-Biber, 2013b). By giving the women this choice I hoped the process was more inclusive and collaborative (Oakley, 1981). This course also provided the women with an opportunity to affirm their independence and uniqueness within the process (Wiles, Crow, Heath, & Charles, 2008). With written consent, all the interviews were audio recorded; by doing this I sought to reduce any perceived power imbalance between myself and the women who took part in this study by ensuring, from their perspective, that an accurate record was kept of what was said (Skinner et al., 2005). At the transcription stage measures were taken to reduce the incidence of 'deductive disclosure'. I altered the names of people and places along with unusual hobbies or careers which might be used to trace or identify women who took part in this study (O'Reilly & Kiyimba, 2015).

Consent was fluid, ongoing and open to review; a course which reinforced the women's ability to exercise control and choice over the process (Campbell et al., 2010; Elcioglu et al., 2004). Immediately before an interview took place informed written consent was obtained from all the women on the understanding that they had the right to withdraw at any time without reason (Btoush & Campbell, 2009) (see appendix six). This fluidity proved important in practise; for example when I arrived to interview Bailey we had arranged to meet at 10am. For a variety of reasons Bailey was not able to participate at that time and I waited most of the day for the interview to

take place. I saw Bailey intermittently during my wait and reassured her if she wanted to take part in the research I would wait, equally I would go if she had changed her mind. Bailey was adamant that she wanted to take part. When her interview finally took place Bailey became very upset and sat for some moments and sobbed. We sat in silence. I reached out and touched her shoulder. I reminded Bailey that she could end the interview whenever she wanted but after a while she composed herself and carried on. Bailey's autonomy had been reinforced at several junctures during the day, both in the run up to the interview and during the interview itself. When I later transcribed Bailey's interview I felt an affinity with her as she had shared her sadness with me in that way.

5.10 Risk Management and Researcher

In the section above I have highlighted how I sought to reduce any risk to the women who took part in this study. It is, however, suggested that research planning should also take account of harm to the researcher (Dickson-Swift et al., 2008; Ellsberg & Heise, 2002). This is particularly so in the case of the sensitive research where the 'safety and welfare needs [of the researcher] are often thought through in a cursory manner' (Dickson-Swift et al., 2008, p. 134). There were two aspects of planning in this regard. Firstly, there was a need to safeguard my personal security (World Health Organization, 2001). As mentioned above I conducted the interviews in a place which was safe not only for the women who took part in this study but for me also. To safeguard my identity I did not provide any personal details as a means of contact; I utilised my university email address and used a mobile telephone sim card which was purchased for and dedicated to my research project. I did so to protect against any possibility that my personal information could be obtained by a third party which could potentially put me or the woman at risk (Ellsberg et al., 2001). In addition, I planned for the negative impact the interviews may have on my emotional wellbeing. It is acknowledged that listening to powerful DVA accounts can bring about 'an emotional turmoil' (Baird & Mitchell, 2014, p. 25) which should not be underestimated and may be apparent at several stages of the process not limited to data collection. I accounted for such an eventuality by incorporating a scheme of support via my supervisors to be employed if necessary (Ellsberg & Heise, 2002; Fontes, 2004; Jaggar, 1997).

In the following section I provide an account of the data analysis. It is, however, important to emphasize that from the moment the women's accounts emerged I inevitably overlaid their accounts with my subjectivity. In this way, the analysis is not

finite, it cannot be immunized from my influence: it defies fixed and final categorization. The meaning I ascribe is inevitably entwined and tainted by my own preconceptions. Lacan asserted that there is no universe of discourse (Lacan, 2004); in that all discourse is created and imagined. Neill (2013) goes on to remind us that 'discourse analysis is impossible because it is impossible to approach a text, a slice of discourse, without already distorting that text or discourse with the fact of reception (Neill, 2013, p. 4).

Below I offer an account of the formal data analysis stages of this thesis. I present an examination of the decisions I made of how the data should be organized, presented and in what way a meaning could be assigned to it.

5.11 Data analysis

Aligned with other Lacanian scholars (Van Roy, Marché-Paillé, Geerardyn, & Vanheule; Vanheule, 2002) my approach to the formal data analysis stage was influenced by thematic coding as outlined by Braun and Clarke (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This wide-ranging research tool is often associated with qualitative research (Bryman, 2012); being considered particularly useful in research which involves rich data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). According to Braun and Clarke a key tenet of thematic analysis is its flexibility and malleability to divergent theoretical frameworks, so that it goes 'beyond the semantic content of the data and starts to identify or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualizations - and ideologies - that are theorized as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84).

I considered that such an approach would accommodate the women's complex, detailed accounts of abuse they experienced in the context of sporting events. As mentioned above, I implemented this method taking direction from Braun and Clarke's six point guide to thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and this is outlined below.

I opted to transcribe the audio recordings myself a course which allowed me to remain close to, and immerse myself within, the data (Reinharz & Davidman, 1992). I did not 'smooth out' their accounts, rather I sought to express and 'preserve some of the messiness of everyday talk' (DeVault, 1990, p. 109). In this way, I captured some of essence of who they were and what was unique to them. At times during the actual interviews I had been distracted by 'housekeeping' concerns such as whether the recording equipment was working or whether outside traffic would dominate the

recording. When transcribing, however, these inconsequential details dissipated and I felt an intimacy with the women which the practicalities of the interviews had, at times, obscured. Having completed the transcription process I reviewed the data; I did not limit this task to re-reading the transcripts, as Kvale warns:

...transcripts are not copies or representations of some original reality, they are interpretative constructions that are useful tools for given purposes. Transcripts are de contextualized conversations, they are abstractions, as topographical maps are abstractions from the original landscape from which they are derived (Kvale, 2008, p. 98).

To supplement and refresh my understanding of the transcripts, with which I was now very familiar, I listened to the recordings when necessary, re read the pen portraits and consulted my journal so that my analysis was both reflexive and located within the broader data schema. This approach was consistent with my resolve to produce research which was reliable and credible - an aspect which was discussed earlier in this chapter.

I went on to organize systematically the data; broad codes which I considered relevant to the study's 'research focus' were identified (Bryman, 2012, p. 581). Interrelations between the codes were documented and they were then grouped to form themes. This was a dynamic and creative process: I used 'sticky notes' to record codes and using colour-coded highlighters the codes were then grouped to distinguish themes. The 'sticky notes' were placed on a notice board and this allowed me easily to shift the data to reflect my observations. In this way a visual 'thematic' map was generated (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This was not a static process and the map was open to constant review. The themes were not seen in isolation but were constantly assessed against the data as a whole. I went on to distill the themes into smaller subthemes, so that close inspection was 'used to discover, explore and generate an increasingly refined conceptual description of the phenomena' (Silverman, 2016, p. 332). I revisited the thematic groups and subgroups many times, so that they were defined and refined: some new groups were formed whilst others were discarded for a lack of rigor. Motivated by the prospect that Lacan's theory would prove a useful tool in understanding the data, I contemplated and evaluated the thematically grouped data with the notion of the RSI in mind. I produced a duplicate thematic map and literally cut it up into themes; I then went back and forth between the thematic map and Lacanian theory exploring how elements of the RSI entwined to disclose an

understanding of the women's experiences. This was an intense and all-consuming process; I regularly took time out and engaged in other tasks - a course which allowed for periods of reflection and consolidation. My data analysis was discussed at several supervision meetings spanning several months, in this way it was open to robust debate and discussion with my supervisors who are experienced researchers. In addition, I presented my data analysis, as it evolved, at conferences and other opportunities thus exposing it to wider scrutiny.

The final stage suggested by Braun and Clarke is report writing (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This is presented in the analysis and discussion chapters of this study (see chapters seven, eight, nine and ten), which remain close to the data. To encourage fidelity direct quotes from the interviews are included to test and reflect the meaning I ascribed. In this way, I sought to avoid an abstract application of my theoretical orientation. The inclusion of such extracts further served an important role by reinforcing and marinating the primacy of the women's experiences (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). As part of my reflexivity, I left an audit trail of this process which provided a clear account to support my data analysis (O'Reilly & Kiyimba, 2015).

Finally, it is worthy of mention that I considered and rejected the use of a data analysis computer program to assist my analysis. I concluded that such a tool was superficially attractive as it would undoubtedly expedite my analysis (Kvale, 2008). This course would, however, invite 'an air of scientific objectivity' (Gray, 2013, p. 498) which would be incongruous with my epistemic and ontological underpinnings. I considered it would undermine my subjectivity and distance me from the voices of the women.

Taken together this and the preceding chapter (see chapter four) have provided an explanation of the backdrop of this study, the methodological underpinnings, its design and execution. In the following chapter I introduce the women who took part in this study.

Chapter Six: Pen Portraits

6.1 Introduction

My thesis is about hearing the women's voices, however, these accounts were always much more than voices to me. I came to know what the women looked like, how they dressed, how they smelt, their accents and their mannerisms. To aid reflexivity I wrote thick, detailed descriptions of our meetings in my journal. These descriptions served well to keep me close to each woman particularly at the stage of data analysis. My journal contained reams of notes with careful jottings; it captured my personal reflections and candid observations. When I had penned these notes, I had not envisaged they would be read by anyone else, let alone replicated in my study. I felt privileged to hold this intimate knowledge but how to deal with it, if at all, within my study presented a serious dilemma.

The more time I spent scrutinising the women's accounts the more attentive I became to their stories as a whole as opposed to the extracts I had selected. I recognised that however hard I tried to exercise reflexivity and thus locate myself within the study, there were issues of power, once I appropriated these accounts. Tensions emerged as I sought to respect the women's stories whilst, at the same time, seeking to reconstitute selected passages for my study and thus public consumption (Ribbens & Edwards, 1997). My dilemma was not unique, others have highlighted such a struggle encountered when working with women's accounts (Finch, 2004). My concern crystallised; it was an anxiety that when the stories were edited into extracts they would be decontextualized, disjointed, fragmented and hence diluted. To redress this I considered providing a broader account of the women's stories contextualising where these extracts had once been located. The women's accounts were interwoven with personal detail and any reproduction would inevitably involve careful and extensive editing. Beyond the issue of anonymity, however, I was more concerned that the women themselves were never intended to be the focus of my study which was not about the women but their experiences. Before the interviews commenced I had established informed consent but later I asked myself the question 'consent to what?' Had the women really consented to my using their stories as opposed to their voices? (Miller & Bell, 2012). Thus, I grappled with how and what to amplify and how and what to silence. This conflict, which centred on the role of the participants' accounts, also served to emphasise my role as the researcher: what to include was within my baggage-laden domain, thus highlighting the power I held over these accounts. Ribbens and Edwards, in addressing the issues of power imbalance, sum up the feminist researchers' dilemma in this way:

...as long as she is seeking to be heard by a public academic audience, she cannot evade the necessity to interpret the words and understandings of the Other into a discourse or knowledge from that which can be understood and accepted within the dominant Western framework of knowledge and culture...Even as the researcher may seek to make herself apparent as the translator, via self-reflexivity, she risks making herself more central to the discourse (Ribbens & Edwards, 1997, p. 3).

There was no easy resolution to my predicament; there was a subtlety in keeping the women central to my project whilst guarding against a voyeurism which would result in the women themselves becoming the focus of academic enquiry (Radford & Stanko, 1996). I settled on the notion of realist tales, described as ‘a rather direct matter of fact portrait...unclouded by concern for how the fieldworker produced such a portrait’ (Van Maanen, 2011, p. 7). This course has not fully resolved the difficulty; whilst consistent with my epistemic position regarding projecting the women’s voices, I concede that it may attract accusations that the women themselves have been improperly and even unfairly promoted. Whilst I accept that these tensions exist, I have concluded that adopting this format is a positive means of promoting the voices of the participants by framing their accounts within their broader narrative context. Ancillary to this, it enhances the reader’s understanding of DVA by acting as a balance and setting to the passages I have selected.

The women’s tales

6.2 Amber

I met Amber through the Freedom Programme, she was in her mid-twenties when we met. Amber wanted to talk to me about her ex-partner Rob. They had lived together for four years and separated the year before our interview. Rob was a few years junior to Amber, he had a child from a previous relationship who lived with them intermittently.

In the early days of their relationship Rob was very attentive and caring. Amber and Rob moved in together and Amber became pregnant. Rob’s attitude towards Amber deteriorated during the pregnancy and continued to decline once their daughter was born.

Rob disapproved of Amber's friendships and slowly she lost contact with her all her friends. He criticised her family and discouraged on-going contact despite the fact they lived locally. Slowly Rob took control of where Amber went and whom she associated. Rob would accuse Amber of infidelity: he was jealous, possessive and verbally abusive towards her. If Amber had been out with the children she would be questioned about where she had been and Rob would check up on her account through receipts and discreetly questioning others. Throughout the relationship Rob worked only occasionally and Amber worked constantly, however, Rob controlled all the finances. He monitored closely the money Amber spent; she was compelled to produce receipts to prove where she had been and what she had purchased.

Rob would sometimes follow rugby, however, he was a very keen football supporter. Amber described how Rob would watch football matches on television in the public house with friends. On such occasions he would drink alcohol to excess. A cycle of behaviour emerged whereby Rob would watch football in the public house with friends, he would get drunk and then come home and rape Amber. This sexually abusive behaviour only happened in these circumstances and came to dominate Amber's life. She described the fear and anxiety she felt waiting for Rob to come home after a football match. Occasionally Rob would telephone ahead and to say he was on his way home but not turn up, such incidents left Amber afraid and confused. Amber sought unsuccessfully to avoid the assaults by pretending to be asleep or going to the bathroom. Amber tried to shield the children from what was happening by organising a sleepover for them elsewhere. After the assaults had occurred there was never any reference to what had happened.

During the time they were together, Rob was unfaithful and had several affairs. It was following one of these affairs that they separated acrimoniously. Amber told me she was still trying to make sense of what had happened to her.

6.3 Ann

Ann was in her late forties and living in a refuge when we met. She spoke to me about her husband, Tim. They had met when Ann was a teenager and still at school, he was many years her senior and an older friend of her brother. They married when she was 16 years old. Ann told me she had two grown up children, a grandson and step grandchildren.

From the beginning of their relationship Tim had been possessive. When the abuse started, it had been limited to verbal abuse, this later progressed into physical

violence. In her interview, Ann described the beatings she endured. Over the years, she had sustained a number of physical injuries which included fractures to her wrists, cheekbones and an eye socket. Afterwards, Tim had always apologised for his behaviour and promised it would not be repeated but it was. During the marriage Tim was very controlling and generally insisted on accompanying Ann whenever she went out, including to all medical appointments, this had been a factor which had prevented Ann making disclosures about some of her injuries. Tim had his own business and it was important that he did not have any criminal convictions. Ann told me she had previously retracted complaints made to the police because a conviction would cost Tim his business.

Ann worked for much of her married life, her employers had commented on her regular injuries and suggested that she was in an abusive relationship but Ann had not confirmed this. Ann's continued employment had caused both friction and jealousy within the home.

Ann was not much interested in sports save for the Olympics whereas Tim was a keen sports fan who watched sports on television but he would also go to football matches and the races. He regularly gambled on sporting outcomes. Tim would watch sport in the company of male friends, he did not generally drink alcohol although he did drink sometimes when he watched sport. If Tim watched sport away from the home he would control who Ann was with and telephone her as a means of monitoring her. Ann described how Tim would be angry when he watched sport and annoyed if the sport did not result in his desired outcome. This wrath often translated into physical violence towards Ann. Ann was accustomed to checking scores before Tim came home and trying to appease him once he was home as a means of limiting the abuse she would have to endure.

Ann and Tim were estranged after the last incident of violence which had taken place nine days before our meeting. Tim had returned home from watching a football match at a friend's house, he was angry with Ann about comments she had made on the telephone and, as a result, he seriously assaulted Ann to the extent that she was coughing up blood. A neighbour heard the commotion and came to the house to find Ann badly injured. Tim refused to seek medical assistance for Ann and the neighbour took Ann to hospital. Initially, Ann told the clinical team that she had fallen down the stairs but the medical staff discounted this explanation as not being consistent with the injuries she had sustained. Ann eventually told the doctors about the assault and, as a result, the police became involved and a criminal prosecution had been instigated. This prosecution represented the fifth time Ann had reported Tim to the police, none

of the past cases had gone to court. At the time I met Ann she was living many miles from her home in an out of area refuge. None of her family, save one cousin, knew of her whereabouts. Ann told me she was committed to Tim's prosecution.

6.4 Bailey

When we met, Bailey was in her thirties and living in a refuge with her daughter who was about three years old. Bailey had been living in various refuges for a year when I interviewed her. She spoke to me about Ed with whom she had lived for seven years. Bailey had several children but she did not disclose any further details about these children who had never lived with Ed and herself.

Bailey and Ed moved in together soon after they met. From the outset Ed used illicit drugs although he did abstain from using for long periods. After about eighteen months Ed began to leave the family home for hours on end; initially Bailey had no idea where he was, but it transpired he was taking Bailey's money and using it to gamble. As time progressed Ed's gambling addiction came to overshadow their lives. Ed was away from home for long periods and gambled away Bailey's money, when that was spent he would shoplift to fund his gambling. Bailey was often left with no money to buy food.

Bailey did not talk to me directly about any nexus between the abuse she endured and sport. Rather, she spoke about how the abuse she sustained was linked to Ed's gambling addiction, his need for money to support this and eventually his drug habit.

Ed's abusive behaviour towards Bailey escalated when she became pregnant with their daughter. Initially, the abuse took the form of financial and verbal abuse. Ed would demand or steal money from Bailey, he would call her names, saying hurtful things about her past and her absent children. If Ed lost money at the 'bookies' he would blame Bailey. Ed became violent after the baby was born. He would often grab Bailey by the throat and hold her up against a wall, alternatively he would pin Bailey down and spit in her face. The police became involved on one occasion, and as a result, Ed was cautioned for assault. The stage was reached when Bailey felt she could stand no more and taking their daughter she went to live in a women's refuge. Bailey was anxious that contact between Ed and his daughter should continue although she was living in a refuge she would return home so that Ed could see their little girl. On one such visit Ed attacked Bailey; he was desperate for money to buy drugs and when Bailey refused to hand over her money Ed damaged property and hit Bailey over the head. At the time of the assault Bailey was on the telephone to the police and had her

daughter in her arms. Ed was subsequently arrested. At the time I met Bailey, Ed was serving a prison sentence for this assault and other unrelated offences.

6.5 Becky

Becky was in her late forties and living in a refuge when we met. Becky told me she had four grown up sons. Becky described how, when she was a child, she and her two sisters and four brothers would all watch the football together. Her brothers would become rowdy and there was banter but there was never any 'trouble'.

Becky spoke to me about Jack, her ex-partner, who was not the father of her sons. Jack enjoyed motorsports and Becky found the change from the football culture refreshing. Jack had initially taken pleasure in explaining motorsports to Becky and promoted her interest, he also welcomed her company following the sport. As time progressed Jack began to resent Becky's interest and would physically exclude her from watching sports with him. As a result, she felt isolated - even in her own home. Jack started to drink alcohol which had an affect on their relationship. Jack would monitor and control Becky when they were apart and he had been watching sports. He would demand to know where she had been and to whom she had been talking on her mobile telephone. Jack was violent to Becky on one occasion, they had been fishing together and Becky caught a fish; angered by Becky's success Jack threatened her and then hit her several times across the face with the fish. Becky was shocked, upset and hurt. This incident was a turning point in their relationship and they parted soon after.

Becky told me she was in the early days of a new relationship with a man she described as a former 'football hooligan' and who was 'football mad'. She told me she would keep her distance from his interests as history had taught her not to get too involved in a partner's sporting hobbies: she had been too interested and too involved in what was essentially Jack's hobby and this had been the root cause of the friction in the home.

6.5 Dynamo Deb

Dynamo Deb (DD) was in her late forties and living in a refuge when I met her. She spoke to me about her former partner Bob. Their relationship lasted about eight years and during that period they lived together intermittently. DD had children from a former relationship who also lived with them over that period.

DD had met Bob at a bar where she worked, he had been her brother's friend. He was a popular man and very knowledgeable about football. DD described how Bob was sociable in public but very different in his private life. He was controlling in many aspects of his life; he strictly controlled his diet and was intolerant on the roads, often engaging in incidents of road rage.

Initially, the relationship was good. Bob was a keen Manchester United supporter, the couple enjoyed watching football and they would go to football matches together. As time passed, however, Bob became violent and controlling towards DD. He restricted with whom DD could have contact; he would escort DD to the bar where she worked and then stay and monitor her interactions whilst at work. If there were trivial problems in the home Bob would blame DD. She described how Bob emotionally abused her by depriving her of sleep, he would 'chip away at her' calling her names and belittling her. Bob was violent towards DD; the physical abuse was often associated with Bob watching football. It was DD's view that Bob was violent around football because he was frustrated that he could not control the game's outcome. If Bob's team lost DD would try to ward off any assault by trying to appease him but this usually failed. Matters reached the stage when anticipating she would be injured, DD would plan a day off work following a major football match. After the incidents of abuse, Bob would blame DD for his behaviour and this would result in DD apologising to Bob for upsetting him.

Over the years, Bob moved out of the home on many occasions. He would often return and beg DD to take him back and she did. Money was an issue during the relationship and it was DD's perception that Bob only returned to live with her when he needed money.

When I met DD the relationship had been over for about ten years. It ended when DD ejected Bob from the home after a family bereavement and despite his attempts to become reconciled DD had refused. DD was in a new relationship when we met, she told me she would not form any future relationships with someone who was a football supporter.

6.7 Linda

Linda was living in a refuge when I interviewed her. A woman in her forties, she wanted to tell me about her ex-husband, Martin, from whom she had separated about six years ago. Linda and Martin met when Linda had been working in a public house.

They married and Linda's grown up son, from a former relationship, lived with them intermittently.

Physical violence and abuse were a consistent feature of their relationship from the outset. Linda told me she had been seriously assaulted by Martin on numerous occasions; she described the many 'beatings' she had sustained. The police had been called several times and Martin had been prosecuted twice for assault. After these beatings Martin would apologise and sometimes sent flowers saying it would never happen again but it always did.

Martin was emotionally abusive; he was jealous, insulting and verbally aggressive towards Linda. He was very controlling and Linda was forced to give up her job to be at home with him. He dictated what Linda wore and she was rarely allowed to go out on her own. Linda found the constant supervision overwhelming and she provided an example of how she would go and sit in the back of a local church to get away from Martin. Linda told me she refused to engage in sexual relations with Martin after he began posting photographs of his genitals on the internet; Martin reacted to Linda's stance with violence and more than once he sexually assaulted her.

Throughout the relationship both Linda and Martin drank alcohol to excess. Martin had worked at the beginning of the relationship but his alcohol habit made him unreliable and he lost his job. Money was an issue, Martin controlled the couple's finances and severely restricted the money available to Linda. Martin limited Linda's contact with others and as a result she became isolated from friends and family. Her family suspected abuse and her sister begged Linda to leave but she refused saying she didn't want to leave her home.

Martin's relationship with his father was a feature in the marriage; Martin would drink with his father at weekends and this led to an increase in the abusive behaviour towards Linda. Martin's relationship with sport was further interwoven with the close relationship with his father. Martin was a football 'fanatic' and in the company of his father he would regularly go to watch football matches leaving Linda at home. On these occasions Linda was not allowed to leave the house. Linda told me that football afforded her a rare opportunity to be alone, however, Martin would telephone from the matches as a means of constantly monitoring her movements. When he returned from the game he would accuse Linda of infidelity and this would be the catalyst for his abusive behaviour which would ultimately end in violence. Linda experienced abuse on many occasions during the relationship, however, football was a particular trigger for the abuse she sustained.

Linda and Martin separated after about seven years of marriage following a bereavement in the family.

6.8 Louise

Louise was interviewed as a result of my attending a Freedom Programme meeting. She was in her forties and she spoke to me about her former partner, Karl. When Louise met Karl, she had already exited one violent relationship and was living alone with her two children. Louise and Karl lived together for eight years.

In the early days of the relationship Karl was charming. He was well-educated and in full time employment. Louise was flattered he was willing to 'take on' her children and herself. When Louise and Karl moved in together things changed. Karl soon began to control where Louise and her children went and to whom they spoke. Louise worked away from the home and Karl monitored her timings to and from work. Louise described how Karl considered nothing being good enough for the family: he decided which schools the children attended and moved them from the local school and away from their friends. He was critical and intolerant of Louise's relations telling her they were no good for her. In this way, he isolated Louise and the children from their former support network which included friends and family. Karl would belittle Louise and, as a result, she lost the confidence to make any decisions; she believed Karl when he told her she was inadequate and lucky to have him. Louise and her children became scared of upsetting Karl, they were constantly trying to placate him living according to his controlling rules: for example, food had to be stacked in a certain way in the cupboards and Louise was not allowed leave the home or make any purchases without his say so.

Louise described Karl as being volatile and manipulative but never violent or aggressive. Louise told me Karl played 'mind games' and she constantly felt on edge; if he was upset he would respond with long periods of silence, he would sulk for days and, on some occasions, he put the house into darkness and went to bed. Louise told me that this behaviour was very difficult to live with, it put a huge strain on her to abide by his rules. Despite this conduct, Louise remained grateful that Karl did not hit her as her first husband had and she felt beholden to Karl for taking on the family.

Karl was a very keen sports fan, his intense interest in sport dictated family life. He watched all types of sports on television including horseracing, tennis, golf and football. He also listened to a range of sports on the radio. Louise told me that sport was a trigger for Karl's controlling and manipulative behaviour. Karl excluded Louise

from sharing his sporting interests. He put pressure on the family to go out of the home when he was watching sport on television and this provided Louise with one of the few opportunities to go out alone. When he watched sport at home and the family were there, Karl banned anyone from entering the room; the layout was such that it prevented the family from going upstairs or using the toilet. Karl would listen to sport on the car radio when he forbade the family from talking, so they travelled in silence - sometimes for hours. Karl blamed Louise and sulked if a sporting event did not have his hoped for result. Eventually Karl stopped working due to ill health and Louise became the breadwinner. At about this time Karl began to gamble online, this habit was linked to sports and was expensive; he regularly lost large sums of money and Louise was under great pressure to bring money into the home.

The relationship ended when allegations of sexually abusing children were made against Karl. At the police station Louise was invited by an officer to telephone a friend or family member to come and support her, she realised she had no one 'he was my world' she told me. Louise and Karl separated immediately once the sexual allegations were made. Karl pleaded guilty to the offences which were committed during the currency of their relationship and he was sentenced to a term of imprisonment.

6.9 Lowri

I met Lowri through the Freedom Programme. She was in her mid-thirties and spoke about a former partner, Roy, who was seven years her senior. They had been in a relationship for five years and had lived together for about three and a half years.

When their relationship started Lowri and Roy enjoyed a good lifestyle - holidaying in smart hotels and eating in expensive restaurants. After they moved in together the relationship changed. Roy isolated Lowri from both friends and family, behaviour which extended to restricting Lowri's visits to her terminally ill mother. Roy would shout in Lowri's face and threaten her, and although he never physically assaulted Lowri she felt afraid of Roy and did all she could to placate him.

Lowri was financially abused, she had been working full time and was economically independent and stable when she met Roy. As time progressed Roy took control of her finances and without her knowledge he applied for several credit cards in her name and ran up debts on each. Lowri was away from work on long term sick leave - Roy suggested that she apply for voluntary redundancy and he negotiated a package on her behalf; when the redundancy package arrived, Roy appropriated the money. Having been made redundant Lowri spent all her time with Roy; she believed this plan

had been deliberate in order to restrict her access to a life outside the home. Lowri had completely trusted Roy to take care of her finances and did not realise she was in substantial debt until she and Roy separated. As a result of Roy's exploitation Lowri had applied for bankruptcy.

Roy was a football fan, he had no friends and would watch the matches at home. Early in the relationship Lowri had noticed that Roy was very superstitious concerning sporting events. At first, she considered these rituals comical, however, Roy's behaviour regarding sport was later used as a means to subjugate Lowri. Roy was superstitious about what he wore during matches as he linked a lost match to his clothing choice. Through threats he coerced Lowri into submitting to his ritualized behaviour: Lowri had to ensure that all Roy's football outfits were washed and ready to be worn. She became so scared of making a mistake that she kept a chart of what clothes had been worn for which matches so that Roy could make appropriate clothing choices.

Roy demanded that he was not disturbed when he watched football matches at home. As a result, Lowri had a choice between staying out of the room until the match was over or sitting in the room in silence. She told me she usually chose the latter as it meant she would not make a noise inadvertently outside the room and disturb Roy. If interrupted during a game Roy would shout at and threaten Lowri to the extent that she would hide in the house and cry. If the team lost Roy would blame Lowri by associating the loss with Lowri's disruptive behaviour.

After a long illness Lowri's mother died. In the days that followed Roy resented the amount of time Lowri spent with her bereaved family. He complained of headaches and threatened to commit suicide if Lowri did not return home to take care of him. Lowri felt shocked by his conduct and with the support of her family, she made the decision to leave Roy and not return home.

6.10 Mary

Mary was in her thirties when I interviewed her. We met initially through a peer support group which was held by one of the gatekeepers. Mary spoke to me about her ex-husband, Paul. They had been married for about ten years and had been separated for over a year when we met.

At the time their relationship started Mary already had a son and Paul had two daughters who lived with their mother. After about a year Paul and Mary bought a

house, married and had a baby boy. Their relationship had initially been very happy but over time things began to deteriorate. Paul's two daughters came to live with them and there were now four children in the home. Paul had always smoked cannabis but his use escalated. Paul lost his job and Mary became the breadwinner. Paul would take money from Mary to buy cannabis and she described how one week she was left with just £20 to feed the family.

Paul did not contribute to the family either financially or practically. Mary found the pressure of working full time, paying the outgoings and caring for the four children onerous and tiring. Paul constantly criticised Mary; he belittled her and would call into question her ability to care for the children. As time passed, Paul became verbally abusive towards the children, he destroyed property in the home and would throw objects at Mary. Despite the abuse she sustained Mary felt a responsibility to keep the family together, however, the two elder children decided they could not live with Paul's behaviour and both left home.

Mary had been close to her family before she met Paul but he disliked them; he would criticise them, challenge their motives and call them names. In the same way, Paul distrusted Mary's friends and he deterred her from ongoing contact. Over time Mary became isolated from her friends and family and so lost her support network outside the home. Ultimately Mary's only female friends were the partners of Paul's friends and Mary was aware that DVA was a feature in these relationships.

The family had a dedicated sports channel on television and when he lost his job Paul would spend his days and nights watching sport. Paul would indiscriminately watch whatever sport was available. Watching sport put Paul in a bad mood and there was an increase in abusive behaviour, particularly emotional abuse, linked to Paul's constant viewing. Paul would stay up into the night and early hours watching international sports such as Formula One racing. Although Mary was working full time, Paul would often wake Mary in the early hours, he would shout abuse at her and deprive Mary of her sleep. The following day Paul would be tired and on edge. The mornings, particularly before the school run, were often a time of tension when Paul would be irritable and aggressive towards Mary. At weekends Mary would try to distract the children from the bad atmosphere in the home and take them out when Paul was watching sports.

Mary left after Paul hit her for the first time. It was a morning before school and their son, who was nine years old, witnessed the assault. Paul attacked Mary in the kitchen and the child dragged his father off. This assault was the catalyst for change and Mary left. When I met Mary her younger son was living with her but the remaining children

had been placed into foster care. She was trying to avoid bankruptcy as a result of the large debts which had accumulated during the currency of the relationship.

6.11 Summary

These women's identities have been masked, however, their portraits provide vivid descriptions of how abusive relationships develop and manifest; they offer an understanding how it is that these abusive relationships persist over time. The accounts reflect how DVA encompasses a range of abusive behaviour which may or may not include physical harm and as such they reveal the complex essence of DVA. Without explicit inclusion in my study these subtle and meaningful insights would have been lost or obscured. The purpose of this chapter is not to be voyeuristic, rather, it provides a setting for the data analysis and discussion (see chapters seven, eight, nine and ten). By highlighting the women's accounts in this way, the reader possesses a richness of detail which will not only enhance their insight into DVA but also add a depth of knowledge regarding the unique contribution each participant made to this study. I explicitly cross reference these portraits in following chapters (see chapters seven, eight, nine and ten) as an *aide memoir* and as a means of embedding this chapter within the study as a whole.

Chapter Seven: Analysis and Discussion

7.1 Introduction to the analysis and discussion chapters

The women who took part in this research are not regarded as the objects of study but rather as individuals with rich stories to tell, who have been involved in the framing of this thesis. Accordingly, the notion of a 'findings' chapter has been discounted as being inappropriate and contrary to the epistemic foundations which have guided this study. In planning the structure of the chapters I have rejected the more conventional layout of analysis followed by discussion, as a clinical arrangement that would present the women as objects of study. I have preferred instead to present the data, the analysis and discussion side-by-side so the women's narratives remain central and there is a fluid and meaningful interrelation between what the women told me and my interpretations. The analysis and discussion are thus embedded within the chapters seven, eight and nine. The final chapter which explores the data is chapter ten, this presents a discrete and reflective chapter to consider the original contribution this study has made.

This chapter mainly takes the perpetrators of the abuse as its focus. The women all presented verbal portraits of their abusers and whilst not specifically relating to the nexus between sport and DVA these observations, by way of an introduction, offer important insights and thus provide a valuable backdrop to the women's accounts. The chapter encapsulates the women's perceptions of sport generally and its apparent uncontested relationship with violence. The chapter concludes by paying attention specifically to the perpetrator and their consumption of sport.

In chapter eight the focus shifts to the abuse the women sustain. It lays the foundation for what is to follow by considering the isolating and insidious nature of the abuse the women endured. The chapter goes on to explore the women's experiences of abuse as it related to sporting events. Their experiences are considered under the general headings of non-physical abuse and physical abuse. The headings have been purposely kept broad to allow a fluid and non-hierarchical representation of the ranges of abuse the women experienced; in this way the emphasis is placed on the women's accounts rather than a categorisation of the abuse.

Chapter nine considers the realities of living within an abusive relationship including the impact sporting events had on the women's lives. The chapter concludes with the women reflecting on their experiences before looking forward to a life which is not dominated by a fear and tension borne of sporting events.

Chapter ten poses the question ‘what does this study tell us?’ I highlight the original contribution this study has made to existing theory and literature.

It is necessary, as a preamble to the data analysis and discussion chapters which follow (chapters seven, eight, nine and ten) to say something of the interviews themselves. The nine women were all interviewed once. The shortest interview lasted about twenty-five minutes and the longest interview about one and a quarter hours. As highlighted elsewhere within this thesis (see chapter 5.11) the interviews were all digitally recorded which I transcribed myself. Five of the interviews took place in the summer of 2014. Timing which coincided with the FIFA World Cup, an international men’s football tournament, which was taking place that summer in Brazil. England was a qualifying team evoking national interest, the matches were broadcast internationally. The women’s interviews were all conducted in a women’s refuge in the North of England. The remaining four interviewees were accessed through women’s support services in Wales and the interviews were carried out at various locations across Wales. The interviews were conducted in the spring of 2015 and roughly coincided with the Six Nations Rugby Championship. The Championship is an annual rugby union tournament which is played at various locations between teams from England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, France and Italy. The games are broadcast nationally.

The ages of the women who took part in this study ranged from mid-twenties to late forties. The women were all white British and the interviews were (as a prerequisite) all conducted in English. All save one woman were mothers; the youngest child was a toddler whilst several of the women had grandchildren. The women all spoke of heterosexual relationships which had ended prior to the interviews taking place. The date of separation varied enormously: Ann left her partner just nine days previously whilst DD spoke of a relationship which had ended ten years before we met. It therefore follows that some but not all the women were accessing services as a result of a subsequent abusive relationship. Further, despite the interviews taking place around the time of combat sport tournaments only one of the women, Ann, (see chapter 6.3) specifically linked any abuse to that sporting event. Throughout the following chapters I have taken passages from the women’s interviews to illustrate and support aspects of the analysis and discussion. Whilst this is generally limited to the abuse the women sustained in connection with sport, the women’s experiences of abuse cannot and should not be viewed in isolation, rather they should be considered within the setting of a continuum of abusive behaviours. In this way, the following chapters are underpinned by chapter six which consisted of pen portraits of what the

women told me of their partners, themselves and the abuse they sustained. At several junctures, the reader is thus invited to cross reference back to chapter six so that the extracts I have selected may be considered within the women's experiences of a broader spectrum of abuse.

In the sections below I examine the rich descriptions the women provided of their abusive partners before going on to consider their insights regarding the nature of sport. Finally, I explore how the perpetrators consumed sport.

The Perpetrator

7.2 Painting a portrait of a perpetrator

The interviews with the women had been a long time coming and were the result of months of planning and preparation. The women and their accounts were pivotal to my study and so I approached the interviews eager to hear what they had to say about the abuse they had sustained. At the beginning of each interview, as a means of reinforcing the women's autonomy, I invited them to tell me where they would like to begin. I was somewhat surprised when at these early stages of the interviews they proceeded to provide rather long and detailed descriptions of their partners. The propensity to reflect about their partners in this way may have been as a result of their exiting the abusive relationship and being in a safe place (Abrahams, 2007) or possibly as a result of the work some of them had undertaken as part of the Freedom Programme (Craven, 2008). In sharing these experiences the women revealed a rich epistemic viewpoint of their male partners. The women were afforded a 'double vision' (Hesse-Biber, 2013b, p. 33) which enabled them to reflect upon their own realities whilst providing them with an intimate knowledge of their dominant abusive partner (Hesse-Biber, 2013b). When I transcribed the interviews, I appreciated the important role my early observations played. They proved to be a valuable foundation vividly setting the scene for what was to follow. They conferred a deeper understanding of relationships which acted as the framework for their abusive experiences. Further, in fore-fronting their partners at this very early stage the women were signposting the domineering role their partners played in their lives.

Despite their abusive experiences some of the women recognised positive characteristics associated with their partners. Louise described her partner as being '*...very, very, very clever. Very, very, very clever*'. Whilst another woman volunteered '*he's a very, very charming man, he's so clever, he's really well-educated*' (Mary). Some of the women referred to their successful careers: DD described her

partner as *'super smooth in his job and being promoted loads of times, they all think he is absolutely wonderful...people flock to him'*. Amber spoke of her partner's popularity when she told me *'you know everybody thinks that the sun shines out his backside'*. These descriptions were disarming and lent a certain balance to the accounts of the abuse which were to follow.

If understood through a Lacanian lens, these narratives suggest that at the outset the women are affirming their partners' position of supremacy within the Symbolic Order. For Lacan the Symbolic Order both predates and determines the subject 'man speaks therefore, but it's because the symbol has made him that man' (Lacan, 1956, p. 39). The Order comprises differential elements which themselves have no significance but acquire value through their mutual relations (Lacan, 2004). The Symbolic Order thus presents the laws of the 'unconscious organisation of human society' (Bailly, 2012, p. 94). The women put their partners on a pedestal wanting to see the best; they depict traits such as affability, intellect and professional achievement which through a Lacanian framework may be considered as having status and meaning within the Symbolic Order (Lacan, 1974). In this way, the women emphasise early on in their accounts how their abusive partners were to be regarded as being respected and valued within that Order.

The women accentuated how their abusive partners could be perceived as successful and charismatic individuals. Some of the women described how they were attracted to these jovial, social characters:

He was always erm, very fun and bubbly when he was with his friends in the pub used to have a laugh and joke...I suppose that's what attracted me to him really, he was such fun, he seemed like a happy person and it, you know? He liked a good laugh like I did and I thought 'oh dear God its true, isn't it? You never know what goes on behind closed doors'. So erm, yeah, he was just totally a different person and we would have a, you know? A really good laugh and that's what I liked about him. But then that all changed, all changed huh! (Amber).

I think this is what attracted me to him. Yeah, he used to come in the pub, that's where I met him in the pub, behind the bar. Everybody would be like, drawn to him and I would be thinking and I knew he liked me anyway, and my brothers would talk to him about football and they would have a brilliant interaction, you know what I mean? And I thought

my brothers like him, they are a good judge of characters. Maybe he's a nice guy? (Dynamo Deb).

Arguably no one enters a relationship anticipating it will become abusive. These genial social interactions of the perpetrator in public expose something of the nature of abuse (including violence) suggesting a pathway to an understanding of the very insidious nature of DVA (Lammers et al., 2005). As Hearne reminds us some men are able to specifically separate violence from other parts of their life so that this violence becomes a separate and distinct activity (Hearn, 1998). By demonstrating affability the perpetrators confirm that they are able to monitor, restrain and control their actions; by contrast the abuse towards the women in the context of their relationship is calculated emphasising the multifaceted and insidious nature of DVA (Robinson, 2010). Aligning with literature on DVA the women suggest that within private space the perpetrator constructs an alternative existence '[A]busers create and maintain a world in which it is their reality that determines the boundaries, rules, and expectations of their partners' (and children's) reality' (Williamson, 2010, p. 1417).

Seen through a Lacanian lens the women started their accounts by emphasising their abusive partners' superiority within the Symbolic Order, highlighting how men were empowered by that Order. As the women's accounts unfolded they revealed an Imaginary realm as they described their own initial attraction to their partners. Here the Imaginary Order conveys a dimension of images both conscious and unconscious (Lacan, 2004). It includes '...the conceptions from sensorial perception' (Bailly, 2012, p. 91) but is further overlaid with the non-sensory '...the body, feelings/affects/emotions, and even perception in significant ways' (Lowther, 2011, p. 2). This connotes a wider Imaginary which cannot be reasoned: a vibe, a hunch, or an intuition '...the dimension of aesthetic fascination and misrecognition' (O'Hara, 2003, p. 136). The Imaginary is not static and is framed and shaped (in part at least) by the Symbolic Order so that 'primary imaginary alienation is determined by the secondary symbolic one, which relies on the Other' (Verhaeghe, 1998). The women's accounts suggest a stitch point between the Symbolic and the Imaginary Orders as their descriptions reveal how they are drawn and attracted to a persona which has attributes they view as prized within the Symbolic Order, ascribing their own understanding and expectations to those attributes. In a Lacanian sense the women are portraying an interpretation of the men which is influenced by the Symbolic Order and filtered through their own Imaginary. This must ultimately produce a misrecognition as meaning is invariably lost in language (Lacan, 1974) though an ever-present gap between what is intended and what is actually said. The women enter

into a relationship with no indication that it will be anything other than linear and healthy.

7.3 Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

As outlined above the accounts provided by the women indicated that their partners were perceived by those outside the home as being capable and genial. As the relationships unfolded the public image projected by their partners gave way to a persona which was very different within the confines of the relationship. Outwardly, the perpetrator presented a life of constancy and commitment compared with a private life of abuse and uncertainty. In their accounts the women revealed the binary nature of their partners' characters:

He was a bit of Jekyll and Hyde, he could turn anytime, and you know what I mean? (Linda).

It's a split personality (Dynamo Deb).

Ann's husband regularly beat her throughout their relationship, she described how in the company of business colleagues her partner was:

...almost completely different; plays the loyal husband when they are all around (Ann).

Louise was in a controlling relationship for 10 years, she described her partner in this way:

Everyone was 'oh what a wonderful man' because to the outside world he was a wonderful man! (Louise).

Amber reflected:

[With his friends] he was like a whole different person, different personality and suppose really, that is the person I knew when I was friends and I didn't know this other person when we got in a relationship (Amber).

She added:

He's like a different person, like I said, when he's with his friends, he's like one person, with me it's another person...the way he behaved towards me is totally different to his friends (Amber).

These contrasting identities say something of the complexity of the women's existence. They are faced with irreconcilable disparity between their abusive existence in private and the illusion of affability created outside the parameters of the intimate relationship. A contradiction arises which serves to maintain and reinforce the perpetrator's power (Stark, 2007). The conflict between the abusive partners' behaviour within and outside the relationship serves to erode the women's self-confidence about their own judgements and perceptions (Lammers et al., 2005). Further, the alienation of the women coupled with the public sociable persona of the perpetrator deprives the women of any external validation of their negative experiences (James & MacKinnon, 2010). It is argued that, for a variety of reasons, women thus '...become accomplices in the redefining of the unreality of the domestic violence abuser. From the moment that [they are] implicated in the initial lie, their ability to challenge that unreality becomes compromised' (Williamson, 2010, p. 1416). Commenting on her interviews with women who had experienced DVA Horley observed:

These two apparent opposites, charm and abuse...run like two threads intertwined in the tapestry of these women's lives. It might be the charm of Dr Jekyll and the abuse of Mr Hyde - and, just as in Stevenson's novel, the activities of Mr Hyde are protected by the character of Dr Jekyll (Horley, 2002, p. 11).

In the following extract, DD goes on to describe how she felt disempowered by her abuser, unable to pierce or challenge the fiction he relied upon. The contradiction between the public and private presented an obstacle to her disclosing (Horley, 2002; Kirkwood, 1993). In this way social relationships and ties outside their relationship became a means by which her abusive partner subtly removed her agency and maintained his power (Elizabeth, 2013; Stark, 2007):

Maybe I didn't tell my brothers what were going on because it would have let them down, because they still stood and talked to him...because

they'd friended him you see? Do you know your mates, your friend's been kicking my friggin' head in for past five years? And all that kind of thing. I just never said nowt (Dynamo Deb).

The women describe a disconnect between their public and private spheres. A detachment between the reality of their abusive relationship in private and the public projection by the abusive partner of a healthy relationship. It may be suggested that a conflict arises between the Symbolic and the Imaginary: to the outside world the men adhere to a convention where they are affable and jovial whereas in their private lives they exercise an abusive power over the women. The perpetrator's ostensible adherence to the Symbolic Order in public weaves a fiction around the abusive relationship. For these women, the Symbolic has been pulled apart as the image the perpetrator projects outside the relationship clashes with the abuse the women endure. Lacan might postulate that these contrasting experiences impact upon and frame the women's Imaginary field where the reactions of others operate as an 'invisible mirror' (Deal & Beal, 2004, p. 118). It is through this lens the women re-frame self. The women endure an irreconcilable disparity between the public and private experiences of their abuser which permeates their Imaginary realm. There are anchor points within the Symbolic but these jar with the Imaginary realm the women experience and as a result the women are left uncertain about their own judgements. A doubt which feeds into their already lowered self-esteem brought about by their partners' behaviour towards them. The women's past experiences of threatening and controlling behaviours corroborate their own appraisal of the perpetrator, however, despite these past experiences the women come to distrust and suppress their own assessments. The women thus reveal the unique relationship they share with the Symbolic Order, as they defer to their abusive partner when he conceals what is happening in private. In this way, there evolves a tacit understanding between the women and the perpetrator regarding the Symbolic they share: it has a different norm and anchor points and disclosure will bring embarrassment, shame and even punishment.

The Nature of Sport

7.4 Sport is for Men

As the women's accounts unfolded they described the domineering role sport played in the lives of their abusive partners and their lives too. Some of the women disclosed that their abusive partners had participated in sports and sporting events at some time in their lives. This involvement ranged from football (4), including up to a semi-professional level, being a jockey (1), and rugby (1). Conversely, at the time we met, none of the women who took part in the interviews had any interest in sport and indeed some described their problematic ongoing relationship with sport, an aspect which is discussed later in chapter nine. For some of the women this detachment was predictable as sport was perceived to be an activity which disregarded women. One woman encapsulated the exclusionary nature of sport in this way:

...women don't play football, women aren't linespeople, women don't play golf, they don't run as much, the money, it's just not as you know? It's a bit silly you know? It's let them have a go. Women jockeys? Nah! You don't see women jockeys very often. American football you know? Erm, it's a man's sport, erm (Louise).

In this extract, Louise emphasises the ongoing marginalisation of women from key roles in popular sport. Louise reflects upon the impasse Connell identified:

What's the problem, then? Why has the liberating potential of sport not been realized? Why is it masculine force, skill and daring that dominates the airwaves, the media, the institutions, and the popular imagination? Why is sport still enmeshed in arrangements and assumptions that deliver privilege to men - not only attention, but hard advantages of money and institutional power? (Connell, 2012, p. 177).

Hence 'despite promising changes on the field of sport' (Light & Wedgwood, 2012, p. 181) it remains overshadowed by masculine values. It continues to reinforce sexual division by unifying men and perpetuating patriarchy (Kidd, 2013).

In emphasising this association between men and sport the women referred to deep rooted, gendered, family affiliations as being significant. These relationships were complicit in forming and maintaining their partner's bond with football:

...his upbringing was mum and nana in the kitchen cooking and dad and grandad are either in the pub watching football or in the living room watching the football and that's how it is. It's just how it is so and there's no budging him from that (Mary).

...used to go out with his dad regular, you know watching the matches? If he didn't go to United, he would still go out you know? And his dad and him for any match which was on really. He used to get complimentary tickets to go to United and City games, from where he worked...then used to take his dad to watch (Linda).

DD related:

[He would] go and watch football with his son...his son played football, he was always at some football match somewhere, and he goes mad if his son's team got beat (Dynamo Deb).

She added, that when her partner's son was born:

...first thing his dad bought him was a ball. Always playing football, signed up for every team you know that he could possibly go to (Dynamo Deb).

These extracts align with that broader body of research which suggests that sport as an institution promotes male practice (for example: Anderson, 2008; Bryson, 1987; Messner, 1990; Messner, 1992; Messner et al., 2000; Messner & Sabo, 1994; Muir & Seitz, 2004). Sport acts as a pedagogy for boys and men where they learn masculinities, form their sense of relationship with each other and also with women (Anderson & McGuire, 2010). Sport it is argued persists as a cultural arena 'developed by males for males' (Kidd, 2013, p. 553).

If read through a Lacanian framework the accounts once again resonate with the Symbolic Order: the organising structure, comprising the social, cultural and linguistic predicates the subject's birth. For Lacan, the subject '...deals first with language; this is a given. He is even caught in it before his birth' (Lacan, 1977b, p. 65).

The subject is thus born into a 'culturally constructed world of symbols' (Deal & Beal, 2004, p. 118). Through their accounts the women highlight the interrelationship between men and sport. They accentuate the pre-existence of that relationship and its endurance within the Symbolic Order: '*It's just how it is*' (Mary), '*...first thing his dad bought him was a ball*' (Dynamo Deb). The accounts further promote an understanding of the Symbolic Order where a bond exists between patriarchy and sport. The accounts suggest that this union between sport and men acts to combine in ways that deny women full access to the Symbolic Order. The Symbolic Order is strengthened by patriarchy and sport as a gendered affiliation feeds this momentum. The women are seen as Other and they are excluded from the supreme world of sport and all it encompasses. The passages are further suggestive of the Lacanian notion of desire: that is, a desire for recognition from 'Other' superimposed by what the Other is perceived to Desire (Lacan, 2004). Lacan elaborated thus '...it is a sort of desire *on the part of* the Other...' (Lacan, 2004, p. 115). So that desire is a quest for recognition and also an endless pursuit of what we sense the Other desires. This is the enigmatic quality of the Real producing a hole in the Symbolic Order and always resisting linguistic expression. The craving for recognition from the Other frames our own desires and our drive (Hewitson, 2010). The pursuit is ongoing and thus futile:

We never fully know exactly what the Other desires or why it desires it, or in what way we ourselves might be implicated. For the subject, desire is thus a constant process of questioning what the Other has or desires to have (Hewitson, 2010, p. 2).

For Lacan, the subject engages in a lifelong and futile effort to anticipate, interpret and respond to the desire of others. In this way, the women are always trying to grasp what they interpret as being expected of them but this evades representation as the enigmatic quality of the Real. This is the '*object petit a*' the impossibility of the subject as what the subject 'seeks can never be found because it never was *something* to be found' (Neill, 2013, p. 13) The women's accounts suggest that in giving precedence to sport the men expose and emphasise the women's own perceived lack⁵. A paradox is created: perceiving a lack in themselves, the women are stimulated to satisfy their partners' desire. The women do not do so freely, they operate within the context of these abusive relationships which confine and govern their lives: a regime is created

⁵ A key point is to acknowledge that for Lacan all subjects are lacking, a lack that comes into being upon entering the symbolic, therefore it is not to say that the women are deficient in any way.

through a series of tacit (and threatening) understandings. The women know that if they do not try to meet their partners' desire there will be negative consequences for them. They attempt to address their partner's demands which give pre-eminence to his sporting interests. They strive to recognise and meet the perpetrator's desire and in consequence his approval and recognition. Their endeavours are, however, fruitless as for Lacan desire may never be satisfied.

7.5 Sport and men's violence

In their interviews several of the women alluded to a connection between football and violence. In line with the existing literature they suggested that this relationship between some combat sports and violence was both accepted and uncontested (Young, 2000, 2012). The women highlighted the nexus by reminiscing about their own childhood experiences and those of their partner. These accounts emphasise a gender narrative which endorses a connection between men and violence (Hearn, 2012a). The women positioned gender as being significant when they revealed how family and wider socialization perpetuated this nexus (Stanley & Wise, 2002):

All my family's City fans. They used to get rowdy as well they used to get fighting and...my brothers and nephews and all. Used to end up fighting (Linda).

No, like I say I have grown up with...I've, it's normal to me, the way I have been grown, know it's like? It's like football, is football eh it? You can take it seriously or you don't. I know people do take it seriously, you know, to the point as, they've smashed their own house up if their team loses or whatever (Becky).

So, I've always been around football, everybody used to come to our house when there was...used to have it on telly before Sky and everything if there was Cup Final day or anything everybody used to come our house. Mum used to make sandwiches so everybody would have a good time, even if when my brother was the same as...knob head [her abusive partner] (laughter) he was the same as that. He was a City fan, my other brother was a Wolves fan and us other seven United fans. So, on Derby days or anything like that everyone just kick shit out of each other you know what I mean?...me and my younger sister, be sat there like that, 'thinking oh no!' And so, it's just normal. So eh, and everyone up the street

used to be up to it, actually, you'd see brothers kicking hell out of each other 'cos they'd be supporting different teams (Dynamo Deb).

DD worked as barmaid for a period, and later on in her interview she commented:

I also knew that if other guys in the pub, if they lost a match, I knew their wives wouldn't be out at the weekend, because they'd have a black eye...or busted ribs or something like that, I just knew (Dynamo Deb).

The passages are salient not only in the way they describe the women's gendered, cultural understandings of violence but further by their acknowledgement that football tolerates or even facilitates violence. Reference is made to violence which is evident both on (Coakley & Donnelly, 2009; Smith, 1983; Young, 2012) and off the pitch (Radford & Hudson, 2005). Their narratives disclose how 'everyday' violence found in some combat sports are complicit in the construction of hegemony (Hearn, 2012b). Thus, it is suggested that a bond exists between men, combat sport and violence:

Our Brian, well he's dead now, but the nicest kindest man you've ever met in your life, he was absolutely wonderful. When he got on that pitch he was a BASTARD! Cutting people up and everything like that, friggin' punching them and everything, and always getting sent off...like they would cut each other up, swear at each other...and then end of match all shook hands and went for a pint (Dynamo Deb).

Louise reflected:

I think sport was just a way, of you know 'oh its lads' you know?...for him it was like the be all and end all this match. Well its not, it's only a game, its meant to be a game, erm (Louise).

Utilising a Lacanian lens, it may be incontrovertible to suggest that the Symbolic Order which generally exists within the United Kingdom does not permit interpersonal violence⁶. This contention is reflected in the formal legislative structure which imposes sanctions on those who inflict violence with no lawful excuse. The

⁶ Reasonable force is sanctioned by law in limited circumstances, by way of example to protect self, another or your property (Criminal Law Act 1967).

women's accounts endorse this understanding, assuming an Order where violence is not generally tolerated: when Dynamo Deb recounted her thoughts watching her brother's fight '*...be sat there like that, 'thinking oh no!'*' (Dynamo Deb). The women go on, however, to project an understanding that is contrary to that Order whereby some sports tolerate or even sanction violence between men: '*it's normal to me*' (Linda) and '*so it's just normal*' (Dynamo Deb). In this way, the women recognise and emphasise a displacement or a pulling apart of the fabric of the Symbolic Order which changes its status, producing a culture in which such violent acts are at least tacitly accepted:

[Sport] forgives all kinds thuggish, erm, selfish, behaviour... (Louise).

I totally believe sport goes hand-in-hand with the violence or it can do...they get all het up and wound up and that's their reason for hitting out. I don't know why, but they can use that as they are getting all wound up (Ann).

The women identify a 'pact' which exists between men, sport and violence. They relate that violence by men within a sporting context is to be overlooked and even excused; violence in these circumstances is without consequence.

7.6 The sports fan

The women provided detailed and insightful accounts as to how their partners consumed sport. As will be seen these rich insights were utilised by the women as a means to manage and resist the abuse they anticipated (see chapter 9.4). As the women's accounts progressed it became apparent that sport was a major feature in the lives of their partners and in consequence the lives of the women. Eight of the nine women described how, during the course of their relationships, the abusive partners regularly watched sport either on television or on occasion at a sporting venue. As Kidd posited '*...sports have a profound effect upon men, our sense of 'masculinity', our relationships with other men (as well as with women) and our place in societies, whether we are players, spectators or entirely ignorant of sports*' (Kidd, 2013, p. 553). The women identified that sport was an activity reserved for men regardless of whether they participated:

I sometimes think that sport was his way, his way of being manly, you know? Even though he didn't erm, even though he didn't go to sport (Louise).

[Men watching sports] it is like the animal thing in it? You know? They like to be to be the king. It's just built in them isn't it? (Becky).

The women were explicit in their accounts that sport, including sports spectatorship, contributed to men's prized sense of manliness (Dunning, 1986; Messner, 1988; Wenner & Gantz, 1998). The women emphasised that for these abusive men their admiration for sport was elevated and dynamic. The abusive men were not merely interested in sport they heavily invested in the experience of watching sport. The term 'fan' is a derivative of fanatic which has at its core an association with demonic possession (Pope & Williams, 2011). It was this powerful language which some of the women adopted to describe their partner's affiliation: 'Massive, massive fan' (Dynamo Deb), 'passionate' (Louise), 'a fanatic Man United fan' (Linda), 'sports mad' (Ann). Lowri added 'it was like a religion'. The parallel between religion and sport is not novel both football and religion involve 'a ritual around cultural artefacts, that generate symbolic communication with performative dimensions' (Armstrong & Giulianotti, 1997, p. 11)

The women outlined how an invisible boundary had been crossed which transformed their partner's 'fandom' from a hobby into an 'infatuation' which was all consuming and ruled family life:

[Sport] it wasn't just a little part of his life, it was, it was a massive part of...he used to say 'ah well, it's a hobby'. But it wasn't a hobby it was an obsession (Louise).

[For her partner] nothing else matters apart from sports and cannabis (Mary).

For some of the male partners a particular sport or team was important, most of the women described their partner supporting a contact sport - mainly football. Repeated references to football, particularly the major teams, Manchester United, Everton and Manchester City recurred throughout the interviews and in a multiplicity of contexts. These findings are themselves unremarkable as football remains the most popular spectator sport in the United Kingdom. Football endures as a sport which represents

the bifurcation of the genders 'football is narcissism: a male love affair with the male gender' (Burton Nelson, 1994, p. 17). Whilst most of the women highlighted football as being significant to their partner others described how there was no particular sport which was paramount as their partners were attracted to a range of sports which traversed the sporting calendar:

I'd say the sport, cos he is sport mad, every sport he will watch. Every sport on TV, likes going to the races, likes going to football (Ann).

This constant viewing of a range of sports brought with it its own pressures as the abusive partner would watch whatever was on the television as long as it was sport related. One woman explained how her partner was committed to watching football but in relation to other sports she commented:

It would be cricket, it would be golf, and it would be American Football...it was always "yeah but you don't understand", because this is the Ryder cup it is only on once every four years or this is Cheltenham 'cos horse racing was a really, really big issue for him. It's only on once a year, but there was so many...sporting erm, tournaments throughout the range of sports he liked that sport completely dominated his, if I say, spare time because when I first met him he worked...it was worse with football; football versus golf and cricket. He used to have to watch cricket as well. Erm, I'd say football was the worst but was football the worst because it was EVERY Saturday? (Louise).

Likewise, Mary portrayed a home where viewing sport was a constant feature:

Erm, but with sport, I mean sport has just ruled our life for the entire relationship. So, sport it's one of those silly things - if it was Macclesfield playing Grimsby we have to watch that match on the telly. There's absolutely no chance for anything else to go on. It was just...dominated and if that wasn't on, it was Sky sports news. It was just sport, sport, sport, drip fed all the time (Mary).

The women described how it was not so much the nature of the sport that mattered but rather the performance of watching a sport which was an outlet for their fanaticism. Following Lacan, I suggest that this sporting pastime could be construed

as contributing to and confirming the men's elevated position within the Symbolic Order. Taking the men as the focus in Lacanian parlance the watching of sport plays an important role in their self-construction. For Lacan self-constitution is an amalgamation which involves the coalescence of discrete perceptions, beliefs, principles and opinions so as to produce a '...unified conception of a single object' (Hogan, 1990, p. 17). So that the abusive men transfer their notion of Ideal I on to the sports field aligning with the model of masculinity and the primacy it offers. The men latch on to this aspect of the Symbolic Order and the exemplar of masculinity that sport embraces. This attachment permeates and shapes the men's Imaginary field, resonating once again with the Lacanian notion of Desire:

[Desire as a] function central to all human experience, is the desire for nothing nameable. And at the same time this desire lies at the origin of every variety of animation. If being were only what it is, there wouldn't even be room to talk about it. Being comes into existence (Lacan, 1988, p. 223).

Desire and lack are intimately linked. The abusive men strive to satisfy their enduring sense of lack through an association with the ideal of masculinity that sport bestows on men. They need not be physically involved in sport to receive the advantages that sport confers in terms of establishing their (male) supremacy and affirming their hegemonic masculinity. It is as a result of their uncertainty regarding the adequacy of their own position in the world, the abusive men seek comfort and reassurance through the ritualised notion of masculinity that sport promises⁷. In addition, their relationship with sport may be used to marginalise the women as 'other'. Sport excludes women and hence provides the abusive men with an additional means, or vessel, whereby they can assert and confirm their authority. This was encapsulated by some of the women when they told me:

*...what he wanted to do, was paramount to you know? To the children.
And his day in the pub, watching the football, drinking with his mates
was more important than spending time with them [the children]
(Amber).*

⁷ A Lacanian frame of reference which moves away from the RSI might suggest that it is the spectacle of sport rather than sport itself, which the men seek an attachment to: in a sense sport represents the men's constant search for meaning which, in this case, manifests in control.

It would upset me, because it would feel like, you know? The sport was way more important than me and the kids, but I would rationalise that as I rationalised everything, he doesn't hit me (Louise).

In these passages the women disclose how their partner's addiction to sport generated a sense of inadequacy. They highlight both the supremacy of sport and, by implication, what they perceive to be their own shortcomings. A hierarchy exists where sport is superior both to the women and the children. The women are not and cannot be commensurate with sport in the eyes of their partner. Louise goes on to verify her purported inferior position by 'rationalising' that her partner does not use violence against her. In Lacanian terms the women are expressing their sense of desire and its accompanying sense of lack (Lacan, 2004): that they are not privileged enough to have access to their partner's prized relationship with sport. As will be seen these Lacanian themes of desire, lack and the Ideal I (of both the perpetrator and the women) recur throughout the following analysis chapters.

Aligning with the broad range of literature which has taken male sport fandom as its focus, the women highlighted how fandom and the allegiance it demanded played an important role in shaping their partners' cultural and social identities (Palmer & Thompson, 2007). The women's accounts suggested that sport fandom was a means adopted by the abusive partners to assert their superiority as a hegemonic male and affirm patriarchy (Bryson, 1987, 1990; Crosset, 2000).

Through their accounts the women described how some perpetrators of abuse had used spatial exclusion to maintain control (Stark, 2007). A cluster of women thus divulged how their partners accentuated the exclusionary nature of sport through physical exclusion from the space where sports were watched. In some instances this was subtle, Becky reflected how she felt uncomfortable in her own home as if intruding when her partner watched sport:

You know like, difference, mood changes, atmosphere you know it was there? And I just, couldn't be bothered then, I just like used to go and sit in a different room or go for a walk or whatever, leave him to it. And then it's where have you been? What have you been doing? You know like, who have you been talking to? If I had been on the phone in the other room, you know like? Stupid, stupid little things. You know like? And I am thinking, 'well what am I supposed to do then?' You know? I can't just sit there and close my eyes and pretend I don't exist 'cos I am here. Do you know what I mean? (Becky).

In the extract above Becky reveals how tensions arose when her partner was watching sport; paradoxically she gained some limited autonomy but as she explained this did not extend to regaining any meaningful control. This experience was shared by another of the women:

Every weekend revolved around sport what sport he was watching. You know I would be allowed out, that sounds terrible doesn't it? I would be encouraged to go out because he was watching sport and didn't want the kids to, you know? That was his day...you would wake up on Saturday 'what your plans today? What you doing today?' Okay I think, I go here and here, or I am not sure 'well you need to decide what you doing' (Louise).

Mary related how she and her children would go out of the home for long periods when her partner watched sport on television:

We just avoided him like the plague, I mean if there was, if the Olympics, World Cup especially was horrendous, so it was just weeks of sort of unable to live comfortably in the house, 'cos it was just dominated by this (Mary).

These women all went on to describe how restrictions were placed on where they could go and what they could do. A theme emerged as some of the women related that when physically absent their partner maintained a significant degree of control over them. This aspect is explored in depth below (see chapter 8.6) when the nature of the abuse is discussed.

7.7 Alcohol, watching sport and domestic violence and abuse

Throughout the interviews the women made references to the public house or 'the pub'. It was highlighted as a space associated with a male drinking culture but it was also significant as an outlet for male sports' fandom practice (Dixon, 2014):

Watching the sport, he would never watch it at home, it was always in the pub with his friends drinking (Amber).

The inextricable link between sport and alcohol consumption has been well documented (Jones et al., 2006; Messner & Montez de Oca, 2005). Earlier, in my literature review (see chapter 3.7.2), I highlighted the range of extensive multi-disciplinary academic work which has investigated the complex relationship between sport and substance misuse (commonly alcohol). In light of the plethora of research I specifically covered the issue of alcohol use and sport in my semi-structured interviews. I limit my exploration of this topic at this stage to the complexities which surround alcohol use and the perpetrator watching sport.

Apart from Mary, whose family life was dominated by her abusive partner's cannabis use, the majority of the women who spoke of substance use and fandom spoke about their partners' relationship with alcohol. As highlighted above the correlation between drinking alcohol and sports fandom is academically uncontroversial (Palmer, 2014a); a wealth of literature persuades us that alcohol consumption can be crucial to the construction of the sports fan's experience and identity (Thompson et al., 2011). This nexus was apparent in several of the women's interviews:

He would drink [alcohol] to celebrate the fact that they'd won and he would drink [alcohol] as a commiserations for them, so regardless, I don't particularly think, on reflection now, that he was interested in that team in particular. I think it was just an excuse to go out and drink, Yeah (Amber).

[After watching football the abuse] was worse, he'd come in paralytic, expecting me in...dragging me down, saying I was cheating him... (Linda).

...he didn't always drink, but more often than not if watching a football match, mainly they [the perpetrator and his friends] would (Ann).

In the above account the 'they' to which Ann refers are her partner's male friends. This association between gender/alcohol/sport was suggested by other women so that the sport/alcohol nexus was intertwined and complicated by a male drinking culture:

I used to dread the World Cup 'cos he wasn't a drinker my husband but could guarantee come the World Cup he'd drink, 'cos he'd be with all his friends watching it at whoever's house, mine, in pub, wherever, and

that's where he drinks and he get even nastier when he's had a drink, not a very nice person (Ann).

[the abusive partner prioritised] his day in the pub, watching the football, drinking with his [male] mates...(Amber).

These narratives confirm the correlation explored by academics, between male camaraderie, sport and alcohol consumption. A triad which was been described by Wenner as the '...holy trinity of alcohol, sports and hegemonic masculinity' (Wenner, 1998, p. 7). The women in their accounts did not seek to challenge the bond between men, sport and alcohol. Their insights into this nexus suggested that such a union was uncontested and culturally understood (Thompson et al., 2011).

Through a Lacanian frame, it might be suggested that alcohol serves to alienate the women from the Symbolic Order which exists beyond their relationships. The abusive partners' consumption of sport is viewed as being entwined with a male drinking culture. The women have an acceptance they are 'other' and hence excluded from such gatherings. This collateral alienation serves to cement the superiority of sport within the Symbolic Order as a pastime reserved for men. Some women highlighted the importance of the perpetrator's peer group: a group of men who shared an interest in watching sport. They are explored below.

7.8 'Birds of a feather stick together'

Some of the abusive men watched sport alone and this aspect is discussed in chapter nine. Other women divulged how their abusive partner's male social circle was interwoven with his consumption of sport:

If like, the boxing, the house would be full...all the lads would be round cos muggins [indicates self] paid for the box office (laughter, cough) for an easy life (Mary).

...he'd be with all his friends watching it...a boxing fight and he had a few friends, was sat there. It was the early hours, I'd gone to bed (Ann).

The women went on to reveal that these male groups were not only united by a fanaticism with sport they also shared an outlook which condoned and even

perpetuated the use of violence towards women. The abusive partner's (sports watching) friendship groups were described in this way:

They are all in the same clique...they think it's all right to beat their wives up or whatever. They are all made from same cloth I think. They were, thinking back (Ann).

He had a lot of friends but I was never allowed to meet any of them... one had got children, erm, but he wasn't allowed to see his children by himself because he'd drink quite heavily...he would beat his girlfriend up...'birds of a feather flock together' and you never think about it until you go, go away and I think you know that's probably right (Amber).

[His male friends] all of those were abusive in their relationships as well. It's all very controlling relationships and they kind of, they don't egg each other on, but none of them says 'that's out of order'. I separated with him last year, it was within another couple of months I had heard that two girls had been horrifically beaten, and their partners had gone to jail and this was, these were his friends. So they kind of? Yeah, I don't know if they colluded with each other but it was just accepted and that's what it was (Mary).

This tacit acceptance of violence towards women by the sports watching friendship group was graphically illustrated by Ann:

[Having heard a commotion Ann went into the lounge to investigate] so anyway whoever they were supporting weren't doing very well. And I made the one mistake of saying to him 'oh for God's sake, it's only a boxing match' and I got proper back handed for it. He actually hit me in the face, 'cos I was sat next to him, and he whacked me in the face with the back of the hand to tell me. I'm sat there in shock, 'cos normally he won't do it in front of anyone and like I said he had friends there, and went like that to me 'it's not just a boxing match. He should be fighting better' and I thought 'I am getting out of the way now' so I got up and got out of the way (Ann).

The friends were therefore characterised as sports fans who were embedded in a gendered fellowship but also a group who practised misogyny which extended to the use of violence against women (Burton Nelson, 1994; Radford & Hudson, 2005). Within some male sub-groups 'it is men who do not engage in women abuse who are the deviants and whose bond with the dominant patriarchal social order is weak or broken' (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2013, p. 73). This broadly aligns with the literature which suggests that sport fandom encourages a cult of masculinity and football in particular gives 'permission' for an alternative moral code, so that '[by] failing to sanction both football-related and domestic violence, permissions are granted for these behaviours' (Radford & Hudson, 2005, p. 192).

A route to understanding the complexity of these accounts might be found once more through an explanation of the Symbolic. It is uncontentious that DVA is not tolerated by society within the United Kingdom. This is made explicit through the formal legislative framework including DVA specific legislation which decrees that DVA in its many forms is unacceptable and any such deviance will be penalised through both the civil and criminal courts. The position society adopts regarding DVA is further reinforced through less formal structures such as women's charities. Lacanian theory may postulate that these structures indicate that within the Symbolic Order DVA will not be tolerated. This notion was reinforced by the women's understanding that DVA should be hidden from others, as highlighted earlier in this chapter, and was again reinforced by Ann when she told me '*...normally he won't do it in front of anyone*' (Ann). It could be argued that the abusive men generally conceal the abuse as such behaviour runs against the Symbolic Order and subsequent disclosure might lead to ostracisation and perhaps even formal penalty. The women's accounts, however, reveal how a collective sports fan group submit to a code which overlooks DVA. For these groups, there is a shift in the very fabric of the Symbolic through their implicit and mutual understanding that elements of the Symbolic Order, in this instance the unacceptability of DVA, may be disregarded.

The Lacanian formation of self is a two-way process consisting of both the Imaginary and the Symbolic (Loos, 2002). Despite their silence brought about by fear, the women acknowledge that DVA is against the Symbolic Order: Mary related how in relation to DVA none of the peer group said '*that's out of order*' [Mary]. Once again, the women disclose how a friction exists between their understanding of the Symbolic Order and their lived experience which includes DVA. This inconsistency feeds into the women's Imaginary realm as they are presented with an irreconcilability which disrupts their confidence regarding their own judgements. This aspect is further

examined in some detail below when the alienation experienced by the women is considered.

Chapter Eight: Analysis and Discussion

The Abuse

8.1 Introduction

The abuse the women endured is at the core of this chapter. To be understood it is first necessary to say something of the women's broader experiences of DVA and these are explored as a foundation to this chapter. The chapter moves on to present a more nuanced approach presenting an examination of both the non-physical and physical abuse the women sustained in connection with sporting events. The chapter is arranged in this way for convenience to provide a coherent examination of the topics. It is important to stress that a division between types of abuse is artificial as the women experienced a whole range of abusive behaviours.

8.2 '*...not just in football, he was nasty anyway*'

The women who took part in this study identified a range of abusive behaviours consistent with the literature relating to DVA (Pence & Paymar, 1993; World Health Organization, 2010). The pen portraits presented in chapter six outlined how these behaviours included physical and economic abuse, emotional abuse, coercive and controlling behaviours. The narratives disclosed how the male partners used sport as an additional means at their disposal to promote their own superiority and to subjugate the women:

...but you know in other aspects of life, not just in football, he was nasty anyway. But, the football thing, the football thing, and, erm, and money worries was the two big things (Lowri).

[Sport] was just another excuse to lose his temper or completely belittle me and the kids, like I say, it was very abusive (Mary).

Insightfully another woman expressed it in this way:

I don't think it's even just sport, or anything like that, if it's in yer, it's in yer. You know what I mean? If you are a knob you are a knob (Dynamo Deb).

Thus the accounts revealed how this abusive behaviour around sport fitted into a larger schema of abuse, confirming that DVA must be viewed as an ongoing pattern of behaviour and not a 'one off' event attributable to factors such as a single sporting event or alcohol consumption (Brimicombe & Cafe, 2012).

8.3 The nature of domestic violence and abuse

This study takes as its focus DVA at its interface with sporting events. It is, however, necessary to contextualise the women's narratives, to say something of the nature of DVA more generally. It is unremarkable to suggest that within the context of DVA abusers often isolate their partners and thereby drastically reduce their social circle and support structure (Lammers et al., 2005) This abusive alienation, used as a technique to control the women's autonomy, was alluded to throughout the women's interviews. Such accounts should be considered within the context of their abusive relationships and it is important to reference back to the pen portraits which encapsulate the women's lives at that time (see chapter six). The women told me this:

He was very controlling anyway, he was real control freak, erm, so...I felt imprisoned because I had, he made me leave my job and I was with him 24/7. He didn't like it when I went to see my mum who was dying, he was just like 'oh stay here with me! I've got a migraine' and I was just like 'erm hello?' (Lowri).

I used to work behind the bar, as well. So, he would sit at the end of the bar making sure I weren't talking to anybody (Dynamo Deb).

Now my husband went everywhere with me more often than not including to doctors' appointments, hospital appointments you could guarantee it. He was making sure to what I was telling the doctor, that's what it was (Ann).

He had isolated me completely from my family. I didn't speak to my mum, my dad. I was really close, I have always been really close with my mum. From the start, he's very much been 'she's not nice' he's sort of drip fed me how nasty my mum is to me and how controlling, and she's always got her claws into me, she's manipulating me. He hated me having contact with my mum, 'cos my mum would go 'this isn't right' and she would question everything. No, he really didn't like it all. I didn't

...speak to my brother for three years...literally I had no friends and no family support (Mary).

I lost a lot of friends during our relationship. He tried to break up my relationship with my parents saying my mum was a bad mum, she was just interfering; we couldn't live our life while she was around. And, erm, my mum, you know she could clearly see what was going on, and, erm I couldn't, and she used to say 'he's no good, he's this, that and the other' (Amber).

Later Amber reflected:

I am so grateful for my mum to sticking by me for so long she could have quite easily walked away and said 'you know? get on with it!' and then I would have been left with nobody 'cos I don't have no friends now (Amber).

Louise told me:

...isolated me from everybody. Yes, went out to work, but I left the house at 10 to 8 to be in work at 8, I had to be home at lunch time, go back to work and be home at 5.10 when I finished at 5 o'clock. And we did everything together... (Louise).

She added:

Over the years that we were with him, our world shrank desperately...when I met him, I was, I had friends, you know I saw my family, I had a social life, he never ever told me I couldn't see anybody, but he always would find reasons why they weren't good enough to be in my life (Louise).

When describing how her partner had been arrested for offences of sexual assault she said this:

...I sat in the police station... [the police said] who can we call for you? And I hate this now, and I sat there and said 'there's no one, he's my best

friend'...my mum lives 4 or 5 miles from me and I hadn't seen her for nearly a year...he managed to isolate me from everybody (Louise).

Likewise, Linda gave a particularly graphic account of how her autonomy and independence had been eroded:

He'd come home with me, as I say he'd like, everywhere didn't want me on my own, even walking from...I was working in the pub, but I ended up giving it up because he didn't want me going out, didn't want me working (Linda).

She went on to explain that:

As I say, I had to go with him everywhere, even if I went to shops he'd come with me. Seeing how much I was spending on shopping or whatever (Linda).

For Linda, her partner's constant presence became overwhelming to the extent that she would go and sit on her own in the back of a church to be alone:

I used to just say 'can I go to church?' to get out the way from him. Sometimes... if he beat me the day before on the Saturday he'd say 'yeah' (Linda).

The women's narratives suggested that they were prevented from belonging to any community; slowly and insidiously they were denied access to and removed from the wider Symbolic Order. The women's Imaginary realm contracted as they became isolated from family, friends and other social connections. An alternative Symbolic Order was constituted within their intimate relationships where women were configured by their domineering and abusive partners. The women become dependent on their abusive partners for their self-construction: a power which he exploits. In the absence of emotional, cultural and cognitive resources the women's agency is thus impeded. As Shaw reminds us:

The ego Ideal, for any subject, is both a strength and a weakness: it is a means by which the subject may view her/himself as positive and secure.

It is also a lack, the point at which the subject is most vulnerable, because it is determined and conditioned by others (Shaw, 2005, p. 192).

The women revealed how such emotional abuse had operated to diminish their confidence and self-esteem. Such alienation, coupled with the women's 'non-relationship' with the Symbolic Order, impacted significantly on their ability to constitute self. This recurring, patterned, cycle of emotionally abusive behaviours which form DVA can lead to long term negative consequences '...damage to a person's self-value and self-confidence and may result in a sense of diminished identity...In addition, this diminished identity is associated with the further loss of self-esteem' (Lammers et al., 2005, p. 35). The women related an erosion of their self-worth as they were repeatedly belittled and humiliated by their partners:

He could, just confuse me totally, say something and then turn it round like it was me who started it and I would think 'was it me?' And I would end up apologising for doing it. But he did that, he was so clever at it (Dynamo Deb).

Anything I done he didn't believe me. It's like, if I said that was white, he'd turn around and say no it would be black. He never said it, but that's how he put me down (Linda).

And:

.... dragging me down...oh I was a slag, I was this, and I was cheating on him. [He couldn't] stand the sight of me (Linda).

[He told me] he's the only person that's ever loved me, erm, no one else, no one else has ever loved me at all. He can see why I hate myself completely and why I have mental issues, as I am so evil... [I believed] one hundred percent, I am a horrible, horrible, person...it was ingrained in me how useless I was...yeah (Mary).

Mary added:

I honestly just believed I had been incompetent for a long time, so I've been trying all these self-help things (laughter) and it wasn't me in the end (Mary).

These extracts regarding the emotional abuse the women endured demonstrate the complexity of the women's lives. Stark suggests that such an erosion of self may be viewed as part of the 'technology' of coercive control so that 'by framing the controller's oppression as an attempt to co-op and deconstruct a women's personhood, it reaffirms what many victims themselves feel' (Stark, 2007, p. 216).

The idea that the women remained in these abusive relationships is sometimes a matter of debate. As a barrister I was often asked 'how could you defend someone who you knew was guilty?' It became a stock question. As a researcher making DVA my focus, the question I am most often asked is 'why don't the women leave?' Such a question is offensive by its inference that the women are in some way responsible for the abuse they endure: 'its recitation invites an explanation of a phenomenon - her failure to leave - that many find inexplicable' (Elizabeth, 2013, p. 62). The question is further problematic in that it places the focus on the women rather than on the domination they endure (Stark, 2007). It is argued that the focus should shift to:

...the 'cage.' The cage is made up of bars that imprison (either physically or psychologically) and only by starting with these bars and the behaviours they represent can we truly understand how and why women respond to domestic abuse in the ways they do. In other words, when we examine any aspect of domestic violence, we need to focus on the impact of abuse, which is influenced by the context in which abuse takes place (Williamson, 2010, p. 1414).

Adopting the triad of the Real, the Symbolic and Imaginary Lacan offers a constructive way forward offering helpful insights which serve to remove the focus from the women to the women's location within the relationship (Shaw, 2005). As stated desire is inseparable from lack; it is the force that determines all human activity (Lacan, 2004). Lack is an incompleteness, a void, present in all subjects which becomes apparent when a subject becomes castrated as he leaves the Imaginary and enters the Symbolic: a lacuna exists between what the subject intends to say and what he actually says.

The formation of the Ideal I is fluid; during the currency of these abusive relationships the women have become alienated and come to rely upon their partner as the sole

source for their ongoing construction of who they are. The perpetrator seeks to mask his own lack by conferring onto the women a self-image which is flawed. This sense of lack reflected onto the women may relate to a number of things, however, they resist representation as they are extra linguistic, lost in the Real: there is an ever-present gap, a slippage between what is said and what is understood. The women reach for something that will forever be beyond their grasp. Thus the women's response to the abuse they endure may be interpreted as a predictable consequence of these abusive, controlling relationships (Shaw, 2005). They strive to quell the desire of the other but of course this is lost in language as any 'attempt to fulfil the desire of the other and one's own ideal...' is futile (Shaw, 2005, p. 192). This surplus, the *l'objet petit a* 'is the thing constantly sought after which no-one can actually have or enjoy' (Bailly, 2012). The women embark on an endless (and ultimately hopeless) quest to meet their partners' expectations. This theme of the women being caught up in a fruitless cycle of trying to please or appease their partners was recurrent throughout the interviews and is explored throughout the analysis. Returning then to the question 'why don't the women leave?' The more pertinent question is 'how could someone treat the women like that?'

In the sections above I have presented a general examination of the women's experiences of abuse. In the section which follows, I consider the non-physical abuse the women sustained as it related to sporting events.

Sport and non-physical abuse

8.4 Abiding by the rules

As the women's accounts unfolded a picture emerged of how the perpetrators consumed their sporting interests. For them sport was not an inclusive entertaining pastime but rather an endeavour which was fraught with issues of power, aggression and ritualistic behaviour (Sabo et al., 2000). Louise did not experience physical abuse during the currency of her abusive relationship. Her partner's viewing of sport was, however, accompanied with an exercise of power in a form that has been described as 'silent control' (Matheson et al., 2015, p. 562):

And what would put him in a bad mood? Yes, sport would put him in a bad mood. [When he heard the football scores] if things didn't go the way he wanted them to go, he'd be in a bad mood...he would sulk (Louise).

She added:

If they lost, and particularly they lost and he thought it wasn't fair...he would be in a bad mood and a bad mood for him was sulking and we would get the silent treatment. Again you think, you know, the silent treatment - you think that's not damaging? But it is so, so, damaging (Louise).

The women described how, as part of the pattern of DVA, the abusive partners laid down numerous rules to which they were compelled to adhere. These 'rules' were fluid and uncertain so that the perpetrator controlled not only the boundaries but '...also the rules that determine those boundaries' (Williamson, 2010, p. 1418). It can be suggested that this ambiguity about the rules is itself a form of emotional abuse. The uncertainty is utilised by the perpetrators to accentuate and confirm their own power whilst diminishing and undermining the women's self-esteem (Lammers et al., 2005; Matheson et al., 2015):

He completely destroyed our family, completely destroyed our family, completely, utterly and so beyond anything my first husband did. I mean my first husband hit me and that is far, far easier to get over than the mind games he'd played. You know the constant, mind games that he played with me (Louise).

...you see you can never tell with him because he changed the goal posts all the time. Never knew what was right and something you had done right the one day, was wrong the day after (Mary).

Lowri told me:

...he didn't sit me, sit me down and tell me the rules...introduce me to them sort of like, like a proper manipulator really...

She added:

You know he put down the rules and you should, and even if those rules change, and you don't know, you are expected, you SHOULD know (Lowri).

Lacan would postulate that these passages reveal how the women strive to meet the desire of their abuser for recognition but no matter how hard they try they will always disappoint. A disparity exists between what is desired and what is interpreted as being desired; what is desired is inevitably lost in language in the ever-present gap between intentionality and what is actually said. Further, the uncertainty projected by the men implies that the demands can never be met and so control is perpetual. The subjugation of the women extends to this constant ongoing pressure as they struggle to fulfil their partner's demands - their own wants and needs are irrelevant as the abusive partner's demands become overbearing. When describing the Mirror stage Lacan relates how a child moves from the Real, to the Symbolic and Imaginary. The Real resists representation. It is 'in principle un-symbolizable, un-representable, and should also be in principle virtually un-experienceable' (O'Hara, 2003, p. 137). Once the subject has access to Symbolic Order and in turn language the Real is lost forever and can never be regained (Lacan, 1974). From a Lacanian perspective, this constant shift by the perpetrator and striving to appease, described by the women, can be read as an ongoing quest by the perpetrators to rediscover the Real: the *l'objet petite a* the unobtainable object of desire. The women's constant attempt to meet their partners' ever-changing needs is a course which is doomed to failure. Lacan reminds us that once there is access to language, the Real is lost forever (Lacan, 2004). The descriptions provided by the women trace how they endeavour to meet this desire for 'nothing nameable' (Lacan, 1988). Žižek usefully configures this concept by adopting a dream allegory:

The relation of the subject to the object experienced by every one of us in a dream: the subject, faster than the object, gets closer and closer to it and yet can never attain it – the dream paradox of a constant approach of an object that nevertheless preserves a constant distance (Žižek, 1992b, p. 4).

The descriptions provided by the women trace how they endeavour to meet this desire for 'nothing nameable' (Lacan, 1988) ⁸.

8.5 Sport as a means to subjugate

⁸ An alternative Lacanian interpretation which takes the abusive men as its focus might suggest that the men's lack of control over sport is exported into their private lives: they cannot control sport but they can control 'their' women.

As highlighted in chapter seven the abusive partners' consumption of sport operated in such a way to confirm their (male) supremacy. Sport acted to exclude women, confirming the 'prejudice that males are a breed apart' (Kidd, 2013, p. 551). In their interviews the women described how their partners utilised the power of sport as an additional means of subjugation. Louise, a working woman and mother of two children, highlighted how she was deemed to be inferior to her partner and unable to understand the rules and nuances of the sports he watched:

I tried to engage in it [her abusers sporting interests] as it was such a big part of his life...he couldn't explain it to me, 'cos I wouldn't understand (Louise).

This account which should be seen in the setting of her abusive relationship (see chapter 6.8), was consistent with another of her partner's behaviours when taken together eroded Louise's self-esteem and undermined her self-confidence (Harne & Radford, 2008; Lammers et al., 2005; Matheson et al., 2015). Within this context of using sport as an additional means to subjugate, a cluster of women described how their abusive partners laid down rules to which they were required to adhere, ostensibly creating an environment where sport could be consumed uninterrupted:

If you'd been out on a Saturday, you had to be back in the car for when the scores came through...you weren't allowed to speak, so if you were travelling home and you were going to be in the car for a couple hours, the kids weren't allowed to talk. I wasn't allowed to talk because he was listening to the radio (Louise).

Such controlling behaviours say something of the spatially and temporally diverse dynamics of coercive control (Stark, 2007, 2009). Where rules are used as a tool to control and subjugate the women (Lammers et al., 2005). For the women, the rules went further in that they not only reinforced the partner's dominance but they were used to emphasise the superiority of sport. Louise described how her partner prohibited the family from entering the living room when he was watching sport:

...if sport was on, you weren't able to, you know? It had to be peace and quiet in house. You couldn't walk through the living room (Louise).

Consequently, the layout of the home prevented Louise and her children from going upstairs or using the toilet: *'...it was so, so, so important to him'* Louise concluded.

It is appropriate at this stage to fore-front Lowri, who in her interview described the obsessive and demanding behaviour which her partner displayed around football. This formed part of the mesh of controlling behaviours which dominated Lowri's daily living and the following extracts should be seen in the context of the wide ranging emotional abuse Lowri sustained (see chapter 6.9). Lowri provided rich accounts of how her partner's multiple rules around watching football came to control their life together. Lowri's partner insisted on wearing his team's kit to watch matches at home and Lowri was compelled to have his kit ready:

... I would have to make sure that his t-shirt underpants and socks that he had for the team were washed, okay, fine, I got used to erm, and I had to make sure I knew when all the football matches were in order to get these things cleaned in time, erm, and if they weren't cleaned in time or one was missing or something then he would be absolutely horrible to me (Lowri).

Lowri went on to explain that to ensure compliance she made a wall chart showing when matches were on and what her partner had worn for various past games. Further Lowri had to ensure that her partner could watch the game uninterrupted:

And just before a game he would, he like 'make sure the dogs are walked, get me a coffee quick, quick, quick, it's about to start' so you had to do all these commands for him before the game started (Lowri).

It was a key rule that Lowri was *'not supposed to walk in during a match...or walk out during a match'* (Lowri).

She explained:

...during a match he had these rules which I had to obey to...if the game starts and I was in the room I wasn't allowed to leave the room whilst the match was on...I couldn't even get to go to the toilet, I couldn't do anything until it was half time or if the game had finished...you know, even if you were dying for the toilet you couldn't go because he would be like 'don't! Do not dare leave this room whilst the match is on', you know?

And you know like? You weren't allowed to say anything negative during the match...(Lowri).

So that:

And I thought it was easier to stay in the room than be outside for the whole match because there's no chance of me walking in by mistake, you know? So, I thought if I stayed in the room I know when the games started and when it's finished...(Lowri).

From a Lacanian perspective these controlling behaviours reflect the subject's constant disappointment and loss: a dissatisfaction which is a perpetual lacking apparent in every subject. For his part the perpetrator exploits Lowri's efforts to satisfy by making increasing, bizarre and unobtainable demands. He 'employs the wishes and needs of the recipient her/himself in order to mask his/her own lack' (Shaw, 2005, p. 192). No matter how hard Lowri tries his desire cannot be satisfied⁹. Lowri is dependent on her partner for the formulation of her Ideal I which, through a pattern of abusive behaviours, has been manipulated by her abuser. Her incomplete access to the Symbolic Order leaves her powerless and unable to challenge this behaviour.

Lowri was aware that the demands made of her were unrealistic, unjustified or even bizarre: Lowri told me '*I just thought, this is stupid*'. Despite such insights Lowri complied; a form of self-regulation 'threats are used to place a woman in fear of something horrible happening if she doesn't do what he wants. The threat allows the coercion to be effective. The fear doesn't go away like a black eye...' (Pence & Paymar, 1993, p. 134). Women, like Lowri, comply fearing that deviance will bring adverse consequences (Crossman, Hardesty, & Raffaelli, 2015; Lammers et al., 2005; Stark, 2009). As Lowri told me:

...after a lot of abuse you just learnt to keep quiet and abide to the rules because that's how you get to an easier life, you know? Its erm, it's, it's because we, because with him it was all to do with the emotional abuse erm, and every, and when it was worse, it was every time I tried to stand up for myself (Lowri).

⁹ It might be suggested that Lowri's partner's inability to dictate the terms of the game crosses over into controlling Lowri. He negotiates and positions himself through power: his fragile existence is exposed when he searches for a subject to dominate.

8.6 Controlling from afar

As highlighted above some of the women described their partner's demanding and unreasonable behaviour when they consumed sport within the home. Another of the women described how their partners watched sport away from the home and in doing so a common theme emerged as they disclosed that when physically absent and watching sport, their abusive partner continued to assert a power over them. These accounts reveal how the abusive partners excluded the women from sport but continued to maintain control over them and their movements.

Linda told me this:

[When he went to watch a match] that was the only time he left me to be in the house, I weren't allowed out when he was at football (Linda).

She later added:

Sometimes it was a relief for him to go out [to the football]. He was constantly phoning me when he was out with his dad, saying 'where are you?' And 'what you doing? What's that noise in the background? Who's there?' And just the same old thing...got in and then he accused of me of having people in 'what's this? How come there's two cups on the table?' And I said 'well, you left one there before you went out. I've not cleared up yet'... so didn't believe me - crack! [Indicates being hit] (Linda).

Other women likewise described the control their partners exercised from afar:

[At the perpetrators bidding Louise and her children had left the house so he could watch sport]...if I was five minutes late back, or changed my plan you know? If I bought something, bought something, he would always find it was cheaper on line, 'why did you buy that?' It would get to the point, you know, only when you look back, I think if you went to buy something, the girls would always say 'ahhh what will he say? Oh well we won't get it today', 'cos you have to double check with him (Louise).

[When he returned from watching football he would say] 'Where have you been? What have you been up to?' And, erm, he even like, at a later date, if I would say I have been to my mum's he would quite discreetly double check and clarify with my mum that I had been there. If I had been out 'where's the receipts? Where's the change?' Even though it was my money, 'cos I was never allowed any of his money, erm, yeah, 'where's the receipts?' then he would question the children...I wasn't allowed to do anything (Amber).

He couldn't care less [where I was when he watched sport]. As long as he knew I was at home or round as he worded it 'knew or trusted' in other words, more often than not, the wife of his friends and his business partners. That was fine (Ann).

She added:

[He phoned me at half time] he says to me 'what you doing?'...I asked 'how is the match going?...he came in after and he went, 'why did you do that before? Ask how the game was? You weren't interested, not interested in anything I want to do' started the argument, but he gave me a real bad beating this time (Ann).

In this way, the women recounted how their partners' consumption of sport, particularly football, encompassed an exercise of ongoing surveillance and restriction; the women were excluded from sport but this did not lead to their autonomy. By deploying an ongoing control when physically absent, the perpetrators maintained power by blurring the distinction between freedom and regulation (Stark, 2007). The women described how they were constantly held by a web of power which invisibly contained them: from one perspective sport liberated but they remained constrained.

Lacan might hypothesise that abusive partners distrusted anything outside the Order which they have created (Suess, 2003). When away from their partners, through an ongoing surveillance and restriction, the men guard against any means whereby that Order might be dislodged and their power disrupted or challenged.

8.7 Laying the blame and upsetting the karma

As was noted above, the perpetrators isolated the women who took part in this study from friends and family, they belittled the women and eroded their self-confidence. In DVA this 'relentlessness of the attack on identity maintains the erosion of self over the course of the relationship' (Matheson et al., 2015, p. 564), denying the women a sense of 'person hood' (Stark, 2007). As an extension of this theme, some of the women described how their partners blamed them for any events which they considered objectionable:

...he would speak to me in a horrible way shouting in my face and everything...he just said that he blamed me (Lowri).

Oh, I got blamed for everything, you name it I would get blamed. It could be raining, could guarantee he'd find reason it was my fault (Anne).

[Everything was] always my fault, but from when I got pregnant with my daughter, erm, I think it started really then and then got horrendous, past year before we came into refuge, it was horrendous (Bailey).

The men's tendency to blame the women for an unwanted outcome was particularly noticeable in the context of football. Throughout her interview Lowri provided examples of how her partner perceived a nexus between her noncompliance with his rules and the team he supported losing:

...if I had sat through the whole match and they lost then he would be okay but if I'd done what I wasn't supposed to do by his rules and then they lost then, he would just sulk, smash things, you know... just be like, like a child really, and it be all my fault and you know and, erm it was bizarre (Lowri).

And:

I walked in and he pushed me out the room...so United scored or something happened and of course it was all my fault you know? Nothing to do with Wayne Rooney scoring a goal, it was all to do with me 'you have upset the Karma of the game' (Lowri).

She added:

...basically, he would be absolutely horrible with me you know me calling me all sorts of names and things, erm and then of course the team losing would be would all be my fault (Lowri).

In this way Lowri highlights an experience shared by other women in that the abusive partner blames them for an unwanted sporting outcome:

...know what else he used to do say? Well if I used to go to the toilet in the pub, and the other team scored. He'd go 'don't you go to the fucking toilet again 'til this match is finished! Yeah? 'Cos he thought it was unlucky...'cos I had been for a pee (Dynamo Deb).

...there would be a few snide remarks, you know what I mean? 'You shouldn't have come to that fucking match, we lost because you came' that kind of thing (Dynamo Deb).

Here the women are describing how their abusive partners viewed them as being complicit in a negative result. It is difficult to understand or put a framework around this abstruse behaviour. Returning to the notion of desire so central to Lacanian theory, it is the desire for recognition from 'Other' based on what the subject supposes the other lacks and so desires. (Lacan, 2004). But lost in language desire presents as:

...a constant level of dissatisfaction for every given subject: not everything can be expressed, and speech does not solve every problem. The lack in the subject, the original missing desire of the other, is masked by the demand for recognition (Shaw, 2005, p. 192).

The abusive men may be regarded as reflecting their own sense of lack onto the women. They raise an expectation that if the women comply with their ultimatum (no matter how nonsensical) then their (the perpetrators') desires will be met. In this way, the women are deemed responsible for an outcome which the perpetrator desires. When the positive result is not achieved the women are blamed and regarded as failing to meet the perpetrators' desires. The women's inability to achieve the positive outcome the men desire serves to reinforce the perception, created by the abusive

men, that the women are inadequate and thus flawed: reinforcing a sense of lack. Of course, rationally this is nonsensical as the result is completely outside the women's gift. The women who are caught up in this tangled web of abuse still strive to meet the men's desire in a hope to satisfy; but they are doomed to fail as the objectives are always beyond their grasp, being fluid and subject to change. For Lacan, it would make no difference whether the demand made by the perpetrator is achievable or not: the desires of the other are always lost in language existing in the void that is the Real. They are all ultimately unattainable¹⁰.

In an abusive relationship a perpetrator may use an actual or implied threat of increased abuse, including physical and sexual violence, as a foundation for the non-physical abuse (Stark, 2007). In this way the perpetrator maintains power and ensures compliance through fear (Harne & Radford, 2008). This was evident in this context of abiding by rules:

And it's like, I remember once I did walk in during a match and did go 'oh my God, I am so sorry' erm and walked back out you know? And then the whole time, there was like 45 minutes left of the game, the whole time I was sitting thinking 'oh my God, oh my God, oh my God, he's going to have a go at me after the game finished because I accidentally walked in' and of course he did (Lowri).

As noted above, the women in their interviews described how they continued to conform to their partner's unreasonable demands knowing that deviance on their part would result in adverse consequences. This aspect is examined in more detail below in the context of the physical abuse they endured.

¹⁰ To take this scenario outside the Lacanian vernacular of the RSI, it might be suggested that sporting ritual represents a Lacanian Phallus. The desperation of the men to maintain control, however, cannot be ensured through sport. When sport as a phallocentric reference point breaks down (by example an unwanted outcome) the men control what they are able to control: they suppress women as an expression of their power. This subjugation manifests in petty, demeaning rituals which bear no association with reality as the women have no control over sport nor its outcome.

Sport and physical abuse

8.8 Physical abuse within the larger schema of domestic violence and abuse

Some of the women related a nexus between their partner watching a sporting event and his use of physical violence towards them, for Amber the physical violence was sexual violence. For those who experienced physical violence they told me that such behaviour was not exclusive to their partner viewing combat sport:

He has hit me before, without any football being on. He got done for his Section 18 (Linda).

I mean he hits me in between [matches] anyway, it's not just sport (Ann).

Putting their physical abuse into context, the women related that watching sport (especially football) irrespective of outcome was generally an indicator that violence was to be expected:

...basically, bopped me head every time there was football (Linda).

[Being hit] sport is the main reason you can guarantee it (Ann).

I don't think he's ever laid a finger on me during a break in football, you know during the 6 weeks? From May to August [the non-physical abuse was ongoing] (Dynamo Deb).

8.9 The significance of sporting outcome

The perpetrator's notion that the female partner could influence a sporting outcome and was to *blame* for an unwanted eventuality was discussed earlier in this chapter. Some of the women returned to sporting outcome when they spoke of being *punished* by their partner for an unwanted outcome. Reflecting the deep fanaticism with which the male partners consumed sport some of the women described how their partners were not limited to expressing disappointment with a loss or a perceived injustice within the sporting arena. The frustration the men experienced translated into resentment and abuse including physical violence which they vented on their partners:

If anything happened in the game which he didn't agree with, he was going mad and saying 'we got robbed'...and ranting and raving like that shouting. So you just didn't speak to him then, let him carry on, 'cos if you spoke to him it was just abuse, hitting me, that's all (Linda).

His sexual behaviour was terrible. He would use the fact his football team had lost to get sex, he was oh, you know? 'Oh feel sorry for me' kind of thing. Erm, like I said, it wouldn't matter if you said 'no' he would, he would still do what he wanted to do (Amber).

[Football scores] if things didn't go the way he wanted them to go, he'd be in a bad mood...he would sulk (Louise).

Ann told me:

He would start an argument and could guarantee it would be over the simplest little thing but you knew it was because of whatever outcome of the football match was (Ann).

She later added:

[An assault occurred] more often than not, if something in it which is not going his way - i.e. his horse has lost or the football's rubbish and all the rest of it (Ann).

In the extracts above the women elude to how the manner of play or the unwanted result of a sporting event was significant in relation to the level of abuse they suffered. In the Literature Review (see chapter 3.6), this study explored that body of academic literature which suggests a sporting outcome may be significant in the context DVA prevalence (Brimicombe & Cafe, 2012; Kirby et al., 2014; Palmer, 2011b; Williams & Neville, 2014). The women in this study provided rich, nuanced insights into this phenomenon. They spoke of a range of sports and identified how a sense of injustice about a score could impact the level of abuse they endured, such abuse was not limited to physical abuse.

An analogy may once again be drawn between this behaviour and the RSI, by suggesting that the men operate in a Symbolic Order which amasses power from

patriarchal tradition. This power is affirmed within their intimate relationships where the men are regarded as superior. The men's 'ideal I' which includes their claim of superiority is unsettled by the adverse sporting result and their Order is thus challenged and disrupted. They try to redress such disharmony by reasserting their authority over the women ¹¹. The connotation, however, remains the same, the women have once again failed to ensure their partner's desires are met:

I knew for a fact that if he didn't like the outcome I was going to get abuse when he got home. Could guarantee it (Dynamo Deb).

As highlighted earlier the women spoke of a range of abuse they sustained during the course of their relationships. The following section presents a discussion regarding the nexus they identified between physical abuse and sport which was not related to any particular sporting outcome. Of the women who experienced physical violence some described how they interpreted their partners' behaviour as being borne of a frustration and anger in watching the game:

Well, say he watched City play Liverpool, I knew for a fact for some reason you would see that anger web up, get higher and higher and higher. He goes red in his face, grits his teeth, he'll swear at the telly (Ann).

Other women highlighted their partners' substance abuse as being a feature in the physical abuse they endured and this is explored below.

8.10 The role of alcohol

Earlier, when considering the abusive males consumption of sport the association between alcohol, sport and men was explored (see chapter 7.7). In this section, the theme of alcohol is returned to in the context of the abuse the women sustained. Extensive multi-disciplinary research has sought to investigate the complex correlation between DVA and alcohol (Eckhardt, 2007; Eckhardt et al., 2015; Gilchrist & Hegarty, 2012; Javaid, 2015; Koss & Gaines, 1993; Peralta et al., 2010; Renzetti et

¹¹ Alternatively, the men have attached a meaning and significance to sport as an expression of 'phallus'. The paradox being they have no control over sport; frustrated by this denial of the Symbolic representation they desire the men export their anger to an exploitation of power over the women i.e. 'I can't control sport but I can control my woman'. In this way, they seek to reclaim a Symbolic Order which an unwanted sporting outcome has temporarily disrupted.

al., 2015). For the women who took part in this study there was either no connection between the abuse they sustained and alcohol, or the association was not concrete. Two of the women, who were not subject to physical abuse but did experience a range of very controlling behaviours, (see chapter 6.8; 6.9) explained that their abusive partners did not drink or rarely drank alcohol:

No didn't drink, didn't take drugs. No very rarely drank. Erm...that's why I thought he was perfect when I met him (laughter) (Louise).

...he hardly ever drank at all. No drugs nothing, no smoking, no drugs, no alcohol. He enjoyed a drink, but not during the game (Lowri).

Whilst for others there was a relationship between alcohol and the physical abuse they experienced however it was not a certainty:

...but these occasions when they are not drinking and they can still just turn on you...wasn't [all] to do with the football, I could do something wrong in house, you know? (Linda).

In recounting the abuse they experienced it was only Amber who specifically narrated an exact and predictable relationship between sport (football), alcohol and violence. During her relationship, Amber was subject to many controlling and abusive behaviours (see chapter 6.2). The sexual assaults she endured were restricted only to those occasions when her partner had been drinking alcohol and watching football:

...it was every time that he'd gone out you know? He would come home and demand, demand it and if you'd say 'no' he'd, he was quite forceful and you wouldn't get a choice anyway. He would pin you down, drag you round and, erm, yeah. I remember crying once, in bed you know saying 'stop it, leave me alone, please stop it' (Amber).

At several junctures during her interview Amber described how she had been raped by her partner but she did not adopt this word finding an alternative discourse to convey her experiences. Amber's use of language in this way is consistent with the literature which suggests that women who endure sexually abusive experiences within

the context of an ongoing relationship may struggle to put emotionally laden language such as 'rape' around their experiences (Walby & Allen, 2004). Amber told me:

I just used to think 'oh you know it's just the drink' and, erm, I used to think 'oh well if he can't go out with his friends then he hasn't really got a life really'. I suppose it became normal to me that it was okay that he went out drinking with his friends and it was normal he'd come home like that because, I don't know, because drink just turns you into a different person...it's not his fault it's because he's had a drink, kind of thing. But then he would never be so drunk he was falling over or being sick (Amber).

Through her account Amber considers a framework which attributes her partner's violent sexual behaviour (but not his other abusive behaviours) to his alcohol consumption; she hints that his sexual violence was constructed through factors (alcohol) and was thus beyond his control (Wood, 2001). In trying to make sense of these events Amber debates whether alcohol consumption acts as a 'shield' which might excuse this behaviour (Javaid, 2015). Further Amber rationalises her experiences as being 'normal'; in a later section I return to how it was that some of the women labelled the abuse they endured as being normative behaviour. Through her account Amber reveals an understanding of her partner and the triggers for the abuse she would endure. Her account may suggest passivity, a sense of inevitability and a loss of control over the abuse she sustains however this is not the case. In the following chapter I consider the reality of living within an abuse relationship and in doing so I present a deeper examination of women's acts of resistance as means to maintain a notion of self.

Chapter Nine: Analysis and Discussion

The Abusive relationship

9.1 Introduction

Chapter eight explored how the women's notion of self was influenced and consequently manipulated by their abusive partner. This chapter presents a further examination of the women's self-constitution. Initially the chapter pays attention to the realities of living within an abusive relationship. The chapter goes on to consider how the women sought to exert some control over the abuse they sustained within the context of sport. Finally, the reflections and insights of the women gained as a result of exiting the relationships, are examined with specific reference to their ongoing and problematic relationship with sport.

9.2 'Walking on eggshells' and sport

The perpetrators of abuse often maintain power through fear (Stark, 2007); subjugated women are coerced into complying afraid of repercussions, physical or otherwise, which might follow should they deviate (James & MacKinnon, 2010; Lammers et al., 2005; Matheson et al., 2015). It is suggested that such fear and threats '...stay with [the abused woman] day in and day out' (Williamson, 2010, p. 1414). So that their daily routines became imbued with tension and dread (Westmarland & Kelly, 2012). Accordingly for women who live within an abusive relationship 'the experience is very much like living with a terrorist—in her own home, every day' (West, 2013, p. 195). Several of the women referred to their unrelenting sense of fear using the phrase 'walking on eggshells' to describe their emotions:

[Around him I felt] tense, tense, walking on eggshells all the time (Mary).

*I don't know...it was just like constantly walking on eggshells with him.
He was just, just, yeah, always there (Bailey).*

I could say he was never violent but he controlled us so utterly with his manipulation, with his mood and you would do everything to try to keep his mood okay, 'cos you would be walking round on eggshells. It sounds so pathetic! You know what I mean? (Louise).

The women divulged an insight into the abuse they sustained and its surrounding circumstances when they recounted how these feelings of trepidation and fear specifically extended to sporting events:

In the last three years, he's got me that on edge when it comes to races, football, World Cup (Ann).

[Watching football with her partner] you know the whole time feeling imprisoned, just sitting there during a game not being able to, well I didn't even talk during a game cos I thought 'oh God what if I say the wrong thing?' It wouldn't be the wrong thing to me, but it might be to him, you know? I could say something one week during a game which was okay, but next week it wouldn't be okay, so you know you never knew where you stand, it was walking on eggshells the whole time (Lowri).

We would walk on eggshells for days afterwards. I don't know how to describe it, he was a very, a very manipulative person who, erm, nothing was ever his fault...if something upset him, it wasn't his fault he was upset: it was because the linesman was wrong, or someone had gone in front of the horse (Louise).

It just makes you anxious right from you know? As soon as he would say 'oh, you know Liverpool are playing on Saturday?' or something, you'd think, 'oh my God!' You'd just, you'd just, filled with dread and think 'oh, we have to go through that again?' (Amber).

She added:

I suppose I was always just in a state of anxiety during the day like [when he was watching football]. I imagine myself now, looking back you know? Like a little bird just flapping around and, you know? (Amber).

Anticipating the sexual violence that would follow, Amber went on to relate how she felt when waiting for her partner to return from watching the football:

I always used to sit, I used to have the sofa underneath the window watching through the window, when he, cos he'd ring and say 'I'm on the way back'. Thinking 'oh God, oh God' and you'd be, I was in the window all, all, like a nervous wreck really, waiting for him; waiting for the knock on the door. But then I don't know whether he did that on purpose, 'cos sometimes he would ring and say he was on his way back then erm, not turn up for hours on end. So I was in the window waiting for him, but he wouldn't turn up sometimes (Amber).

The women described a perpetual state of anxiety; an insecurity brought about by fear and their lack of agency (Kelly & Radford, 1990; Stark & Flitcraft, 1996). Through a Lacanian lens I would suggest that the women's Imaginary Order was distorted: that they lived in a state of fear with their self-esteem diminished, they had no freedom and they were reduced to perpetually looking to their partner for validation. This lens is useful as it extends a meaning which moves away from the women themselves and their traits. It thus allows an interpretation where the women's fear may be viewed as a response to the social order which they experience (Shaw, 2005). The women have reframed self within this controlling Order, they learn to self-regulate to protect themselves and live in an Order where tension is habitual. Such an understanding resonates with an extract highlighted earlier when Amber used the word 'normal' when she sought to make sense of her experiences of DVA which included sexual violence. When reflecting on her experiences Amber told me:

I have only ever been in one relationship before him so I don't really know and I supposed it was just normal in a relationship with someone else. But now, I would never have said apart from all the sexual behaviour, of course I knew that was wrong, what he was doing, but I would never have said you know? That I would consider myself a victim of domestic abuse never (Amber).

She added:

I think he would always remember the next day what happened...tomorrow was another day and that was it; forget about what had happened the day before, just move on (Amber).

In these extracts, Amber struggles to negotiate her experiences and expresses a dilemma as to whether they amount to DVA. This aspect is considered further below.

9.3 Labelling the relationship as abusive

It is argued that women in abusive relationships often struggle to frame their experiences as abusive (Crossman et al., 2015). They may seek to down play the abuse they endure (Hayes, 2013a), so that ‘as women we tend, and indeed are systematically encouraged, to minimize the violence that we experience from men’ (Kelly & Radford, 1990, p. 19). It was notable during the course of their interviews that some of the women did not identify or name their experiences as being abusive. Further the women did not recognise themselves as abused, a perception which may have impeded their quest for autonomy. The process of speaking out about DVA is complex and before women can do so they must be in a position to name their experiences as abusive (Kelly & Radford, 1990). The extracts below should be considered within the context of the pen portraits (see chapter six); the women told me:

I didn’t realise how much I was controlled, I didn’t view myself as a victim, erm...so unbelievably difficult to accept that all those abusive behaviours, or a lot of the abusive behaviours...applied to me (Louise).

I didn’t think I was a victim of domestic violence not at all. I never reported anything, nothing at all (Mary).

I never reported it to anyone. I mean the whole time I was with him I was thinking ‘oh my God, I need to ring someone like Women’s Aid, erm, or the Samaritans’, cos I was feeling really depressed about the way he was treating me. And I thought ‘no, no, no, he’s, he’s never hit me, no physical violence’ thinking that’s the only abuse, that’s the one which gets you into Women’s Aid, and thinking. And then sort of I started googling erm, the signs of an emotional abuser and all the traits, all the characteristics I was thinking, ticking them all, thinking ‘oh God he does this, he does this’ (Lowri).

The women did not frame their partners as perpetrators of DVA, however, rather incongruously they went on to describe how they sought to curtail the abuse they sustained. Specialised knowledge gained through the routine of their everyday lives

(Hesse-Biber, 2013b) was utilised in an attempt to manage their partner's behaviour towards them or at least the environment in which it occurred. In the section below I examine this aspect with a particular focus on how the women strived to maintain some control over the abuse they sustained in and around sporting events.

9.4 Managing the abuse and regaining self

Chapter eight explored how the abusive partners manipulated and moulded the women's self-identity; despite such an erosion it became apparent that some of the women maintained a sense of control which they covertly and skilfully used in an attempt to disrupt their partner's power over them. Researchers in the field of DVA have paid close attention to how women in controlling intimate relationships may come to be the 'author of their own experiences even in the midst of extremely oppressive situations' (Rajah, 2007, p. 209). It is suggested that women in abusive relationships are able to maintain some sense of self by entering what has been described as 'safety zones' which are an '...assertion of subjectivity in an abusive relationship through resistance, refusal, and adaption of safety and survival plans...that sabotage the effect of the control strategies on the personhood while conveying seeming compliance to the perpetrator' (Stark, 2007, p. 216).

Though their narratives, the women described how their subjugated position provided them with a platform from which they could gain an in depth knowledge of their abuser (Hesse-Biber, 2013b). They were able to identify sport as being a trigger for the abuse they endured:

...the actual violence when that started, it got to that extent that I'd check TV to see what the scores of the teams was, what team, what races results going to be (Dynamo Deb).

[Fearing violence] I will actually check, if I have not watched it, I will check on Text to see what the scores are (Ann).

They went on to describe how they harnessed their 'context specific expertise' (Rajah, 2007, p. 217), in an attempt to exert some control over, or mitigate, the abuse they suffered as well as utilising this information as a means to reassert self. The women were not passive instead they challenged the abuse they anticipated (Elizabeth, 2013). Such a discourse should, however, be exercised with care; Stark cautions against placing any onus on women to control or 'escape' from the abuse they endure (Stark,

2009). The accounts of women who took part in this study are remarkable in demonstrating the skill employed to navigate the very fine line between resistance and abuse:

[After a match] like I say, erm, trying everything else, having sex, trying to make him happy you know what I mean? All that lot and, erm, just like I say, he was very, very good at that... I used to think to myself, just friggin' crack me one will you? And get it over and done with cos it's better than listening to this all night (Dynamo Deb).

She later added:

Because I used, used, to think I've got to control this situation because erm, if the kids are in bed and he was arguing and shouting and all this lot, so I had to, like, calm it down. So, it's all like 'it's alright love they've still got another match left, don't worry about it' and all that lot...a lot of the time, well most of the time he was, he just flipped, sometimes fucking mad (Dynamo Deb).

[When he came home from a match] he would come home in a real foul mood and I'd bend over backwards thinking 'keep him happy, he'll be fine'...cook a favourite meal, house always spotless anyway, but make doubly sure. Make sure son and daughter on best behaviour (Ann).

[On match days] if I could, I would try and like, you know? And get Alice to stay at my mum's or something, or I would try to get to bed before he would come home...I used to say 'oh well you might as well stay at your dad's or something', just hoping that he wouldn't come home (Amber).

She went on to say:

Trying to make sure everything was okay; make sure the children was in bed out of the way when the children was with us...cos even if the children was awake he would still, erm, forcefully try to have sex it doesn't matter where you was in the house...I would always make sure the children was out of the way because he wouldn't come back straight

after football, it would be 10, 11 o'clock at night sometimes early hours of the morning (Amber).

[When her partner watched sport] it was just, just so uncomfortable and so unhappy in the house that I tried to distract the kids (Mary).

Mary added:

[When he watched sport at home] just get, just get out of the house really, erm...I just used to take the kids out all the time, it was me and the four kids and we were just OUT. We left him in the house on his own, erm and then we just got back it when it was eating time...and he would snap and pick, very belittling (Mary).

The extracts reveal how the women contrived to manage the expectation of abuse by adopting 'resistance strategies' (Hayes, 2013a, p. 3). This position of sustained resistance by an abused woman has been defined as 'being in control in the context of no control' (Stark, 2009, p. 319). The women who took part in this study described in detail the strategies they adopted. Such strategies were based on their intimate knowledge of their partners' likes and dislikes and dependent on the woman's individual characteristics and the resources available to them (Hayes, 2013a). They related how they strived to placate the perpetrator by making a favourite meal or divert him from the infliction of abuse by suggesting sexual intercourse. They further endeavoured to manage the circumstances surrounding the abuse by removing any children from the home. The strategies they employed were unique to them and based on an emotional acumen gained through their daily lives. They used their insights in an attempt to reduce the abuse, exert control and regain some sense of self.

Lacanian theory tenders a pathway to understanding women's resistance: operating within an alternate and reconfigured Symbolic Order the women did not define themselves as being within an abusive relationship. The subversive attempts by the women to manage the abuse they anticipated reveals a recognition that their partners' behaviour towards them is outside the Order of things. The women's connection to the Symbolic outside their relationship is frayed, however, their resistance demonstrates how they maintain fragments of an awareness of the Order which exists outside the Symbolic they experience. It is through acts of resistance the women seek to manage the Order in which they exist. In doing so they renegotiate their place within that Order by subsuming, albeit covertly, a level of control. A paradox thus

arises as the women reject the notion of being abused but strive to contain the abuse they anticipate. Further tensions exist as the women demonstrate intuition and skill when they seek to limit the abuse they endure. They do so within the context of an Imaginary realm which is shaped by the abusive partner's insistence that they are inadequate and flawed. The accounts thus expose an intractability between the women's Symbolic and Imaginary realms.

9.5 Separation and the women's relationship with sport

Separation is an event which usually signals the end of an ongoing relationship, however, for a woman in abusive relationship leaving an abusive partner is a dangerous endeavour (Stark, 2007). Separation should be viewed as a dynamic and complex process (Keeling et al., 2016). In an abusive relationship separation will not bring a conclusion to the physical risk (Rezzy, 2017) nor the emotional disruption the woman will endure (Elizabeth, 2013). The perpetrator will continue to exert his power even after the relationship has ended (Abrahams, 2007; Hayes, 2013a; Toews & Bermea, 2015). All the women who took part in this study had separated from their abusive partners. Mary described how this estrangement had not curtailed the power her partner held over her:

I still sleep [demonstrates fetal position]. It's been a year since we've separated and I still sleep with my jaw clenched and erm, I don't move all night, I am so sore from being tense all the time (Mary).

The women described how post-separation they experienced enduring, long term consequences of the abuse they had sustained. They disclosed a perpetual, internal fear and anxiety borne of their abusive experiences. The actual abuse was no longer a reality but the fear it generated survived post-separation (Williamson, 2010). The women described how sport remained a site of tension:

It's like the other day Dad was watching erm, Everton and I got up from my seat and I sat back down, because I thought 'oh no! Not supposed to get up during a match' but then 'oh no, it's okay, I can do it here, I am safe here' (Lowri).

[Watching football] suppose it's just brings a lot of memories back and the anxiety really (Amber).

...if football comes on the telly or, erm, and that's quite hard (Louise).

Living apart from the abusive partners, the women regained their autonomy and reconnected with their self-identity. In doing so, they rejected any role sport could play in that identification:

[Sport] I just can't stand it, even when it's on the telly I have to turn it over (Amber).

And so, you know what? Since I've not been with knob head [abusive partner] which is, God, ten years now. I feel completely different about football...I don't go to the pub anymore to watch matches, because I hate the shouting and the screaming and the swearing at the telly and everything like that...I think the matches reminds me of him and that's why I've not watched you know? 'Cos I've not watched them [FIFA World Cup matches] (Dynamo Deb).

It's made me really, really, really hate football. It's like, I don't hate Man City as such but I just hate the whole football thing now, you know? ...it's just made me really, really, really, really hate football and you know I never had that hate before, I was just not very interested in it (Lowri).

[Watching sport] I can't, 'cos it's just been, I have been force fed sports and so have the kids...it's been a massive chunk of my life (Mary).

If considered from a Lacanian perspective it may be suggested that having exited the abusive relationships the women have entered the wider Symbolic Order which exists outside these abusive relationships. The control their partner exerts, however, extends beyond physical separation. The Imaginary 'the dimension of aesthetic fascination and mis-recognition' (O'Hara, 2003, p. 136) is always working alongside the Symbolic, dimensions which are always in tension. The enduring influence the abusive partner wields over the women's Imaginary realm extends beyond the confines of the relationship. In this way, despite separation, the abusive partner's spectre continues to exert a power which frames the women's self-constitution. The autonomy the women have ostensibly gained is tainted by the ongoing power the perpetrator asserts through sport, for them sport is laden with a meaning ascribed by

their abusive relationships. The women endeavour to frustrate the ongoing power of the perpetrator by rejecting sport and in doing so they reject the Order that subsisted within the abusive relationship. This access to the new and alternate Symbolic Order for these women represents an act of transgression: a declaration of agency and a new identity. The women are in a strong position whereby their independence and agency is supported by the discourse of the Symbolic Order both culturally and politically.

Chapter ten: Analysis and Discussion

Pulling together the threads

10.1 Introduction

This chapter draws together, synthesises and reflects upon the preceding chapters by posing the question at the very core of this thesis: what does this study tell us about the interplay between DVA and sport? It offers insights, which translate into proposals for further research, such suggestions are generally rooted within this chapter as it unfolds. The chapter examines the theoretical frameworks which have informed this study, aligning both with FSE and Lacanian theory, and considers in what ways they might offer new prospects for the investigation of DVA. The chapter opens with an examination of some of the main caveats to the study in terms of its planning and implementation. Thus, rather incongruously, the examination of what this study tells us begins by making explicit what it does not tell us.

10.2 Caveats to the study

About seventeen women agreed to take part in this study, in the event nine women were interviewed. It must be acknowledged that a smaller study cannot be considered generalizable in the quantitative sense (Gray, 2013). Value may, however, be found beyond the original sample and setting through the development of richer understandings and the expansion of theory which may translate other situations or form the basis of future research (Bryman, 2012). The advantage of a smaller sample size is its ability to ‘...increase the qualitative researcher’s chances of getting close involvement with their participants in interview-based studies and generating fine-grained data...’(Bryman, 2012, p. 426). I was able to remain close to the nine women who took part in this study and their interviews throughout this process in a manner which would have been prohibitive with large a group.

In terms of representation of the sexes this research was about women and their experiences of DVA and as such it sought to recruit female participants (see appendix one and appendix four). As Williams and Neville remind us ‘it is also worth noting that while the vast majority of the literature concerning sport-related domestic violence considers male-on-female violence, this does not mean that female-on-male or same-sex sport-related domestic violence does not occur’ (Williams & Neville, 2014, p. 14). It may be suggested that future research could deepen understandings by encompassing men or only recruiting men who have experienced DVA at the time

of sporting events. Further, in this regard, the literature which sought to recruit participants remained silent regarding the nature of the relationship between the women and their abuser (appendix four). In the event, all of the women who were interviewed spoke of being abused within the context of a heterosexual relationship¹². Future research might seek to pay attention to same-sex relationships or interfamilial abuse.

The final caveat noted here is the lack of representation from ethnic minority groups. Through the gatekeepers, I met an ethnically diverse group of women who were accessing services. All those who chose to take part in this study were white, British women so a multi-cultural aspect to this thesis was absent. In view of cultural variances which might exist such as patriarchy, masculinity and attitudes towards alcohol consumption, further research in this field would clearly benefit from greater cultural diversity.

10.3 What does this Study tell us?

Despite the caveats outlined above this study provides important and novel insights into the association between an abusive partner's interest in sport and DVA. These are explored in detail below. The examination is presented under three main headings: prevalence, the perpetrator and the abuse.

10.3.1 Prevalence

In the United Kingdom, an amount of scholarly research has sought to explore whether football may be associated with an increase in the incidence of DVA reporting to the police (Brimicombe & Cafe, 2012; Dickson et al., 2012; Kirby et al., 2014; Williams et al., 2013). The limitations of such research have already been highlighted elsewhere (see chapter 3.7): the existing research which is quantitative in nature heavily relies on police statistics regarding the reporting of DVA at or around the time of major tournaments. Such reliance may be considered problematic for a number of reasons (Kirby et al., 2014). The information is not consistently collated by regional forces and it tells us nothing of the incidents themselves in that it anonymises the sexes of those involved and does not disclose the nature of the abuse sustained (Brimicombe & Cafe, 2012; Williams & Neville, 2014). Recognising both the limitations and paucity of current research in this area scholars have called for

¹² One woman who did not attend for interview had disclosed DVA which had been perpetrated by her sons.

research of a qualitative nature involving women who have experienced DVA so that they 'that may support - and give voice to - the largely secondary, statistical data collected on violence against women and sport' (Palmer, 2011b, p. 21). This qualitative study sought to address that lacuna and so enrich understandings by listening to the hitherto neglected voices of the marginalised women who had experienced such abuse.

That literature which sought to recruit participants to take part in this study (see appendix one and appendix four) extended an invitation to those women who recognised an association between their experiences of DVA and sporting events. This study offers some valuable insights regarding published prevalence rates. Of the women who took part in this study only one, after some delay, had reported to the police the abuse she had sustained following a football match (see chapter 6.3). It is suggested that a delay in reporting abuse may result in such figures being disregarded: 'violence may not be reported to the police on the day it occurs, or may not occur on the match day but, say, the day before or after, so its incidence over the tournament period will be diffuse' (Brimicombe & Cafe, 2012, p. 34).

This is important when considering past research and prevalence rates as it tends to imply that none of the abuse the women related in this study would have been encompassed in past quantitative research. The broader issue this suggests is uncontroversial: the global challenge faced by the gross underreporting of DVA (World Health Organization, 2001). In the context of this study the disinclination of the women to complain to the police about the abuse they experienced at the time of sporting events may indicate that there is a greater link between DVA and sporting events within the United Kingdom than hitherto suggested by the quantitative research in this field. Further the nature of the abuse the women sustained may be seen as important when considering prevalence and this aspect is discussed later in this chapter when the abuse the women sustain is examined. The current study emphasises the need for further qualitative research regarding prevalence rates by adopting a larger sample size to test and build upon this data. It may be further suggested that future quantitative research may be enhanced by accessing or producing information which is not reliant on a police complaint, for example, accessing women through community gatekeepers or health services.

10.3.2 The perpetrator

Much of the existing research in the United Kingdom which has taken as its focus the possible nexus between sport and DVA has concerned football and been observational (Williams & Neville, 2014). As such no attention has been paid to the perpetrator of such abuse. The current study offers new insights into those men who perpetuate abuse at the time of sporting events.

In their accounts the women placed masculinity and patriarchy at the fore-front of their narratives, the notion of male supremacy was fundamental in framing and shaping their partner's sense of self. The thread that ran through the individual stories and the narratives as a whole was that of hegemonic masculinity: a form of masculinity which serves to elevate and authorise mainstream forms of masculinity such as physical strength, aggression and prowess whilst marginalizing forms of maleness which do not comply and femininity (Parker & Curtner-Smith, 2012). As Hearne reminds us 'the social category of men is created and recreated in concrete everyday life and institutional practices, interplay with other social categories' (Hearn, 2015, p. 16). The women who took part in this study depicted how their partners' self-identification, as hegemonic males, gathered momentum through an identification with sport; confirming that it is 'difficult to discuss masculinity without noting men's use of sports to construct and maintain masculine identities' (Crosset, 2000, p. 148). They related how their abusers looked to sport, even that viewed from the armchair, as being central to the formation of a superior male identity. The women's accounts suggest that despite the progress which has occurred 'sport remains dominated by masculine values' (Light & Wedgwood, 2012, p. 181); it endures as a bastion of masculinity 'sport, particularly team combat sport, has become over the last century a central feature of the imagery of masculinity, and an important mechanism of gender hegemony in rich countries' (Connell, 2012, p. 177).

The women recounted that for their abusive partners it was the watching of sport, rather than participation in sport, through which male supremacy was confirmed. The women highlighted that their abusive partners heavily invested in an identity as a sports fan. They portrayed men who went beyond a casual observer of sport to an obsessive follower of sports. Broad parallels may be drawn between these accounts and the existing literature conducted in the United Kingdom, when Radford and Hudson explored the notion of football giving 'permissions' for violence including DVA they reported on the 'football mania' (Radford & Hudson, 2005, p. 191) which accompanied football matches. A closer correlation may, however, be found between the women's accounts and older American research (Sabo et al., 2000). Using

qualitative research Sabo, Gary and Moore investigated women's experiences of domestic violence which were associated with televised athletics (American football, hockey and basketball) they commented that:

Televised sport [for the abusers] was not a distant entry in the TV Guide or a flickering ensemble of images on a screen; rather, it constituted a cultural drinking fountain that somehow enabled the men...to define their masculinity in ways that included physical aggression and brutal domination (Sabo et al., 2000, p. 146).

The current study provides a more nuanced account to this sports fandom practice. Existing research in the United Kingdom including grey literature has mainly taken football as its focus (Brimicombe & Cafe, 2012; Joint Action Group, 2011; Kirby et al., 2014; Metropolitan Police Authority; Police and Crime Standards Directorate, 2006; Williams et al., 2013; Williams & Neville, 2014). The women who took part in this study mainly spoke of football, however, some emphasised the breadth of sports their partners followed. This extended to include sports such as cricket, boxing, horse racing and golf. In this way, the women described how it was the consumption of sport *per se* which was important to their abusive partners rather than any particular sport. That is not to say the women's accounts rejected the notion of team loyalty: several of the abusive men had a firm allegiance to a sport or football team. These insights develop the current research within the United Kingdom which has investigated DVA in relation to a specific sport or tournament. It extends understandings in that the partners' abusive behaviour was largely viewed by the women as being linked to a general consumption of sport as opposed to a specific team or sporting activity. The women's accounts emphasise the need for broader based research which is not restricted to a certain match or tournament, so to expand our understanding of this phenomenon.

In their interviews the women spoke of the perpetrators' peer group negative influence; a group with whom they shared an enjoyment of sport and mutual tolerance of DVA (see chapter 7.8). A broad parallel might be struck between these accounts and the 'dominance of the cult of masculinity' (Radford & Hudson, 2005, p. 206) apparent amongst football supporters around the time of football matches. Whilst there is a wealth of academic research which has taken the sports fan as its focus, the women's accounts of these male dominated, sports watching, peer groups and their mutual acceptance of DVA is certainly novel. Further research is needed, perhaps

ethnographic in nature, to interrogate such peer groups and their attitudes towards DVA.

Throughout their accounts the women spoke of a gamut of abuse which they had endured which in most but not all instances, included both physical and non-physical abuse. These accounts are examined in detail below in the context of what they tell us about the sports/DVA nexus.

10.3.3 The abuse

Authors of previous quantitative research who have identified an increase in DVA reporting to the police around the time of major football tournaments have posed the question: ‘if it’s not football, what is it?’ (Brimicombe & Cafe, 2012, p. 33) before adding ‘we have no evidence at an individual level that all or any of the reported domestic violence cases [to the police]...could be associated with watching England fixtures’ (Brimicombe & Cafe, 2012, p. 35). This study thus makes a unique contribution to existing research regarding the nexus between sport and DVA: if only by virtue of their self-selection to take part in this study the women confirm such a connection. The women not only confirmed their experiences of an association between DVA and sporting events they also revealed an increase in the abuse they already endured at the time of such events so that sport acts as a trigger for such abuse. These accounts provide much needed insights into the existing literature which has taken as its focus DVA reporting at the time of combat sports events. The women’s experiences may be read as an indicator that an increase in police reporting of DVA may be linked to an increase in the incidence of DVA *per se*, and not attributable to some other variable mooted by scholars such as an increase in propensity to report such abuse (Kirby et al., 2014).

Researchers who have highlighted the multifaceted nature of DVA have been keen to accentuate that sporting events should not be regarded as ‘causing’ DVA and such abuse should be viewed against the backdrop of a multitude of social and situational factors (Brimicombe & Cafe, 2012; Police and Crime Standards Directorate, 2006). The women who participated in this study emphasised that for them sport was to be regarded as being another trigger for abuse they already endured, so that any examination of these experiences must be placed within the context of their wider abusive experiences. This adds to the existing literature in the United Kingdom in this field, as highlighted above, much of the current research is quantitative in nature and has mainly relied on police reporting at the time of sporting events. Such records may be considered as a ‘snapshot in time’ which relates to a specific particular match,

tournament or event such as the Old Firm football matches (Williams et al., 2013) or the FIFA World Cup Tournament (Kirby et al., 2014). The limitation of this research is that by relying upon an incident of abuse reported at the time of a particular match or tournament it fails to capture the cumulative nature of DVA. It may also assume that sport is a trigger when, in fact, it intensifies existing DVA. Further, it does not recognise the range of abuse which underpins current understanding of DVA and neglects the longer-term effects.

The current study should not be considered longitudinal in nature, the narratives of the women reflect the history and circumstances of their abusive relationships. In this way, the women were able to move away from depictions of an episodic incident of abuse around a sporting event and locate their abusive experiences within a larger schema of DVA which included a range of coercive and controlling behaviours. In doing so the women placed the emphasis on a cycle of DVA. This is significant as it serves to reinforce the importance of regarding such abuse as a pattern of behaviours as opposed to a one-off incident (often characterised as acts of physical violence).

The women's accounts underpin the necessity of viewing DVA as being 'chronic rather than episodic' (Stark, 2007, p. 246). They support contemporary interpretations that non-physical violence and coercive controlling behaviours in particular are a key element of DVA which may be as, if not, more damaging than a violent act (James & MacKinnon, 2010; World Health Organization, 2014a). Thus, the accounts offer a detailed and to some extent a longitudinal element to the women's experiences of DVA around sporting events, understandings which have been absent so far.

As highlighted above, the women described a range of abusive behaviours which they identified as being linked to their partners' sporting interests. These accounts were fluid and non-linear. To aid interpretation, in chapter eight, these accounts were unpicked and somewhat artificially presented in terms of physical and non-physical abuse. In this chapter, a macro approach is adopted when discussing the narratives of abuse in the context of the contribution they make to existing research. The women's accounts were laden with confusion, pain and at times incredulity when some of the women expressed a reluctance to accept their experiences could be viewed as abusive. The women related how sport was perceived by their abusive partners to be a resource which could be called upon to reaffirm their masculine identity through the marginalisation and subjugation of their female partners.

Some of the women identified how watching sport triggered an incidence of physical abuse. It may be suggested that this type of physical abuse is likely to have been captured by police records which formed the primary source for existing research. In

their 2014 study, Kirby et al, relied on policing figures around sporting events which 'recorded incidents include those victims who have reported to the police a violent or threatening act from an individual they are currently (or have recently been), in an intimate relationship with' (Kirby et al., 2014, p. 6). At the time of this, and the other quantitative research highlighted earlier (see chapter 3.6), DVA sat in a very different legal landscape to that which exists in 2017. The law as it previously stood (pre 2015) did not recognise and so did not reflect the controlling, emotional and psychological elements which often form the pattern of DVA (Harne & Radford, 2008). Offences which might ostensibly be deemed DVA (although the DVA term did not exist in the criminal jurisdiction as an offence in itself) were chiefly prosecuted under generic laws which primarily took physical assault as their focus (Harne & Radford, 2008). The offence of Common Assault where only minor injury was caused was the most commonly utilised within the context of DVA (Crown Prosecution Service, 2013). Other non DVA specific offences were likewise adopted by prosecutors in an attempt to reflect the abuse which had occurred, these included offences of criminal damage, rape or harassment (Crown Prosecution Service, 2013, 2016). Hence the laws which were employed to combat and sanction DVA through the criminal justice system did so within a restrictive and somewhat archaic framework.

The Serious Crime Act (2015) came into force at a time when this research project was being undertaken. As highlighted elsewhere (see chapter 2.6.3) this pivotal piece of legislation, which complemented rather than usurped existing laws (Crown Prosecution Service, 2016), introduced legislation which criminalised coercive and controlling behaviours. This has some significance in the context of this study; the women's narratives disclosed abuse which amounted to violence or the threat of violence but they also revealed compelling narratives regarding coercive and controlling behaviours which their partners practised around sporting events. These passages may be regarded as being of particular importance as such behaviours are unlikely to have been captured by previous research which relied on a police report.

The women who took part in this study provided accounts which were salient for the rich detail they provided regarding the manner and means by which sporting events were manipulated by the abusive partner as a means to affirm his power, with or without, the infliction of physical force (at that time or in some cases at all). The women all shared a sense of fear: they were compelled to comply lest they would be punished. Such forms of control demand obedience through the use of vital resources and micro-regulating partners' behaviour (Stark, 2007). In the accounts the women provided, sport was such a resource. It mattered not whether the women and abusive partners shared the same space when the sport was watched, as the abusive partners

employed mechanisms for perpetrating controlling behaviour whether they were deployed directly in the home or remotely. The threat that deviance may have repercussions was enough to 'govern' the women so that they regulate their own behaviour. This resonates with Stark's assertion that controlling behaviours are 'rarely confined to a specific time or space' (Stark, 2007, p. 41). These intricate accounts of the women strengthen our current understanding of DVA and build upon research which suggests that perpetrators of abuse may use resources available to them, across time and space, to subjugate and maintain control. This study is novel in its representation that the watching of sport may be utilised as an additional means open to a perpetrator to inflict physical and non-physical harm.

Researchers have explored how a match result: a win, lose or draw may impact DV reporting to the police (Brimicombe & Cafe, 2012; Card & Dahl, 2011; Kirby et al., 2014). In the absence of qualitative research scholars have speculated that factors such as warmer summer weather and alcohol consumption may play a part in any spike in DV reporting (Kirby et al., 2014). Others have postulated that increased elation, self-confidence and patriotism may affect after game violence (Quigg, Hughes, & Bellis, 2012; Sivarajasingam et al., 2004; Sivarajasingam, Moore, & Shepherd, 2005). The women who contributed to this study offered an alternative insight into a nexus between a result and an increase in DVA. They suggested that alcohol did, on occasion, have a role to play and this is discussed in more detail below. Their accounts, however, revealed more of the insidious and pernicious nature of DVA when they related how their abusive partner burdened them with a role in influencing an outcome and thus blamed and punished them for an unwanted outcome. This is not an explanation advanced by previous scholars who enquired as to the correlation between match day score and increase in violence. It is, however, a strategy which has been considered by academics examining the broader context of DVA. Stark suggests that such behaviour represents 'control for its own sake' (Stark, 2007, p. 281) whereby:

We cannot avoid the startling reality that the instrumental dimensions of coercive control are often subordinated to a contradictory dynamic where control is sought through irrational, arbitrary, and impossible demands...[which] yield no proximate benefit other than the feeling of dominance itself...(Stark, 2007, p. 281).

So that an increase in aggressive and threatening behaviours, or the laying down of rules around sport which must be complied with or the punishment which comes with

an unwanted result, may be viewed as an extension of the men's display of supremacy: the men use sport to dominate and control simply because they are able to. To reiterate DD's perception:

I don't think it's even just sport, or anything like that, if it's in yer, it's in yer. You know what I mean? If you are a knob you are a knob (Dynamo Deb).

Thus, the insights the women provided regarding an escalation in DVA are therefore significant and novel in two respects. Firstly, a cluster of women confirmed an association between a sporting outcome and an escalation in abuse they endured. Further, rather than citing social situational factors as contributing to such an escalation, the women identified tactics which may be viewed as intrinsic to DVA: an irrational pressure to constantly satisfy their partner and provide all that he demands even when such demands are not satiable.

Finally, I turn to the role of alcohol. Whilst emphasising that alcohol does not 'cause' DVA, researchers have argued that it may be viewed as 'one of a cluster of factors that facilitate violence [against women]' (Messner & Montez de Oca, 2005, p. 1839). Scholars have pointed to the 'revered bond' that exists between sport, alcohol and hegemonic masculinity (Wenner, 1998) when they have debated the likely role which excessive alcohol consumption may play in illuminating the association between sport and DVA (Gantz, Wang, & Bradley, 2006; Kirby et al., 2014; Palmer, 2011b; Williams et al., 2013; Williams & Neville, 2014). It has been suggested that raised competitive emotions and excessive alcohol consumption which surround sporting events may be regarded 'as conducive factors, particularly for women already living in vulnerable domestic arrangements' (Palmer, 2011b, p. 1).

The women who took part in this study did not contest the association between sport, masculinity and alcohol and gave rich examples of how such a bond was culturally understood. When they related their own experiences of DVA around sporting events, however, they provided contradictory and alternative understandings of the complex relationship between DVA, sport and alcohol. Only Amber made a definite association between drinking alcohol, football and, in her case, sexual violence. For other women their partners rarely, if ever, drank alcohol and so they departed from the academic speculation that such a bond: the 'holy trinity' of sport, alcohol and hegemonic masculinity (Wenner, 1998, p. 7) may translate into DVA. For some of the women who took part in this study, alcohol played no role in the abuse they sustained; this is significant when viewed against the backdrop of some of the major campaigns which

have taken DVA around sporting events as their focus. It is crucial that campaigns which focus on DVA are accurate as they play a vital role in improving women's lives through education and awareness, if misguided they serve to perpetuate and reinforce myths (West, 2013). As highlighted earlier within this thesis (see chapter 3.8) some of the information which has been circulated by public bodies and others in the run up to combat sport events, as a means of raising awareness around the potential for DVA, have emphasised the role of alcohol. One such campaign which sought to highlight the increase in potential for DVA around major rugby events suggested '...no matter how much alcohol has been drunk, violence against women and domestic abuse is a crime which will not be tolerated' (Welsh Government, 2013). Whilst other literature has cautioned that 'more rigorous research is needed to further investigate the correlation between alcohol, domestic abuse and sporting events' (Alcohol Concern Wales/Cymru, 2010, p. 3).

In this study, the women's accounts provide new insights which challenge past assumptions concerning any association between DVA, combat sport and alcohol. Such assumptions have permeated campaigns which seek to highlight the potential for an increase in DVA around the time of football and rugby matches. In this way, the accounts underscore the need for further research which might usefully explore the multifaceted relationship between combat sport, alcohol and DVA. Such research may be considered vital as a means to inform future campaigns which aim to reduce the incidence of DVA and support those who have endured abuse.

10.4 Theoretical framework

In this section I examine how this study has made an original contribution to existing research by deploying a Lacanian framework to explore the complexities of DVA.

This study was not located within a single theoretical framework but rather guided by two seemingly disparate frameworks, namely, FSE and Lacanian theory. I would argue that such an approach may add a richness to the research process which 'can be approached like an endless quilt with different points of buttoned down meaning where knowledge can emerge from within different relationships' (Raghavan & Cohen, 2013, p. 181).

The initial stages of this project were principally informed and guided by an alignment with FSE. Such a lens is particularly apt in research involving women with rich lived in experiences (Smith, 1987). I considered it an appropriate framework to inform my research which involved women who had experienced DVA. FSE was particularly

useful in that it addressed important issues which may emerge in research involving women, such as the association between knowledge and power, and further the balance of power within the research process (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). Such facets were central to this project which sought to hear the voices of women which had hitherto been neglected. This epistemic viewpoint further provided the women who took part in this study with a vantage point through which their knowledge could be imparted (Harding, 1980; Hartsock, 1987). The usefulness of FSE in exploring issues which involve and concern women is well documented (DeVault, 1990) and may be viewed as uncontroversial (Hesse-Biber, 2013b).

The Lacanian notion of the Borromean Knot (Lacan, 1974): the Real, Symbolic and Imaginary were employed at the latter stages of this project as an explanatory framework through which the complexities of the association between DVA and sport could be explored. For Lacan, the subject is constituted and inaugurated through language and so through other. It is this focus on self-constitution and the relationship with other which made the Lacanian theory, and the RSI in particular, well-suited to an exploration of DVA as this phenomenon has at its core self and the relationship with other. I adjudged that the triad of the RSI offered an original and at times challenging pathway to understanding the complex dynamics of DVA as it related to sporting events. This Lacanian lens was, however, employed with specificity: appropriated with this particular task in mind (Seshadri-Crooks, 2002). At times, it could be viewed as jarring against FSE which had been pivotal at the stages of planning and fieldwork. It may be suggested that such an imbrication is in itself not inconsistent with Lacanian theory which recognises the complexity of socially generated experiences (Lacan, 2013).

There is a dearth of scholarly research which has employed Lacanian theories to explore DVA and that which exists is limited to emotional abuse (Shaw, 2005). The approach of adopting a Lacanian lens, located within the notion of the RSI, as a means of exploring the complex phenomenon of DVA is, as far as I have been able to determine, academically novel. This methodology offers an alternative understanding of DVA by allowing us to observe the impact the abuse has on the women's ability to constitute self; a shift occurs whereby the women's responses are viewed as having been framed by their male partner and the abuse he inflicts. As discussed elsewhere (see chapter 4.8) at times I considered the application of the RSI as being limited, however, it offered a unique contribution as to how Lacanian parlance may be deployed to unravel the interplay between such DVA and sport.

Chapter Eleven: Conclusion

11.1 Introduction

This chapter opens by revisiting the research aims and considering whether they have been met. It is conventional for an academic thesis of this kind to provide concrete, actionable recommendations: an endpoint is anticipated and expected. Any reader of this thesis is likely to be disappointed: I contend there are no tangible, achievable recommendations for policy or practice which emerge from this project. Instead this chapter advances two key points to explicate the significance of this study. This chapter incorporates some reflective comments regarding what I have learnt about myself before concluding with the justification for using Lacanian theory.

11.2 Revisiting the project aims

The aim of this research project was to scrutinise the interplay between DVA and sport (particularly team combat sport) from the perspective of women who have sustained such abuse. It had two main objectives:

- To investigate the women's experiences of DVA in the context of their abusive partners' sporting interests.
- To explore the factors identified by the women as creating an association between such sporting interests and the abuse they endured.

These objectives were linked by an insistence that women's experiences of DVA should be central to this study: accounts which had not previously been heard at best or ignored at worst. As the project progressed it became apparent that the women and their stories were entwined. To present extracts from the interviews in isolation and out of context masked the reality of the women's lives. The reader was thus introduced to the women through verbal sketches in the form of pen portraits (see chapter six). These tales revealed a unique insight into life within an abusive relationship. In this way, the women who took part in this study were valued as real people with real lives rather than extracts or the objects of study. The women were made apparent throughout this thesis in more subtle ways, for example, they were consistently identified as people as opposed to generic 'participants'. These and other strategies were employed so the reader was left in no doubt that it was the women's perceptions which were key. I concede that the reader will never know the women who took part

in this study as I have known them, however, I would suggest that my aim to keep the women's accounts prominent throughout this thesis has been achieved.

This study sought to interrogate any interconnection between women's experiences of DVA and sport. The women who took part related stories of pain and sadness. These accounts were important individually in that each woman shared a different experience. The accounts combined to provide powerful and novel insights; they gathered potency from each other and taken together strong, discernible themes developed regarding the interplay between the women's experiences of abuse and the perpetrators' sporting interests. These themes informed the analysis and discussion chapters (see chapters seven through to ten). The picture which emerged was complex and to be appreciated had to be taken against the backdrop of DVA as a global phenomenon where understandings are nuanced and shifting. The significance of this research is found in its detail and the interpretations it confers regarding the association DVA and sports events, particularly football. The depth and extent of the contribution this study has made to existing research and the ways in which it opens the possibilities for new lines of enquiry were discussed earlier (see chapters seven through to ten). I would argue that these insights, which are *précised* below, suggest that the aims of this study have been met.

11.3 Summary - what does this all mean?

This study has built upon and expanded existing research by listening to the voices of the marginalised. Ontologically it would be flawed to proclaim that this research may provide any solutions to DVA.

Through their generous accounts the women graphically depicted how their male partners alienated them from their support networks, subjected them to coercive and controlling behaviours and at times inflicted physical or sexual violence. The narratives emphasised the importance of moving away from viewing DVA as being incident specific, depicting a moment in time, a match or tournament. They identified a pattern of DVA, as opposed to DV, which escalated or intensified around sporting events. This study has enriched past research which has taken as its focus DV around the time of a particular match or a tournament, a course which reinforced 'the idea that [DV] it is an infrequent act, triggered only at these times' (Crowley et al., 2014, p. 29).

Previous researchers, in the absence of qualitative research, have debated what factors may account for the apparent nexus between sport and DVA (Crowley et al.,

2014; Palmer, 2011b). At several junctures the women who took part in this study, returned to the notion that sport, especially combat sport, applauded attributes associated with manliness such as strength, power and violence (Dunning, 1986). The thread which wove its way through their accounts was one of sport, particularly football and male supremacy. The perpetrators of abuse identified with such sports as being institutions which confirmed the superiority of the men through hegemonic masculinity (Bryson, 1987; Connell, 2012). Sport represented a ‘practice through which men’s collective power and privilege *vis-à-vis* women was reproduced and naturalised’ (McKay et al., 2000, p. 7). It was this association between sport and an elevated form of masculinity which was exploited by the perpetrators. As the women’s accounts unfolded it became apparent that in many respects their stories were less about the nexus between sport and DVA and more about how these abusive men utilised sport (mainly football), a resource available to them, to maintain (male) supremacy and subjugate their partners. The distinction is nuanced but significant. Almost thirty years ago Lois Bryson commented:

Sport is a major arena in which physical force and toughness are woven into hegemonic masculinity and the resultant ideology transmitted. The celebration of ‘real men’ as strong and tough underscores the fact that men are in positions (have the right?) to dominate (Bryson, 1990, p. 173).

These words resonate with the women’s accounts, despite the passage of time.

11.4 Policy implications

This study has not created nor extended a new theory of DVA; there is no ‘blame the ball’ (Radford & Hudson, 2005, p. 191) or ‘blame [the alcohol]’ (Javaid, 2015, p. 77) hypothesis. It has demonstrated how DVA cannot be subject to a ‘quick fix’ solution. It has bolstered our understandings of DVA as a pervasive, nebulous phenomenon which transcends containment: we are constantly left searching for meaning. Against this background, any policy implications would be open to criticism as being either trite or academic posturing. In the sections which follow I do not offer recommendations, rather, I extend two key points which emerge from this study.

11.4.1 Key point one

This study implies that some sports, specifically team combat sport, should be completely overhauled; it cannot continue as an institution which promotes a

heightened version of gendered supremacy open to exploitation by some men. Sport it is suggested, is gendered. It was 'created by men and they control it' (Bryson, 1987, p. 358). Sports endure as global commodities with their histories steeped in a predominately male gendered culture (Connell, 2012). So that revolutionizing football in particular 'as a strategy to eliminating violence against women requires a complete transformation of both the cultures of football and of masculinity' (Radford & Hudson, 2005, p. 206). This objective, whilst laudable, is immense and unrealistic.

A more achievable ambition might be to reduce the prospects for sport, especially team combat sports, to be commandeered by abusive men. At a community and societal level combat sports such as football and rugby must be seen to reject explicitly any inference that the masculinity which they portray may be utilised as an opportunity for the abuse of male power. A pathway to such an objective may be found in athletes, teams and sporting clubs pledging allegiance to campaigns, based on critical research, which confront DVA. It is incumbent on such sports, to unequivocally speak out against DVA.

Paradoxically this key point may be hollow in terms of challenging DVA. The women who took part in this study described a tangled web of abuse where a perpetrator's allegiance with a sport was another vehicle for that abuse. The disturbing implication being, if this sport were unavailable, the perpetrators would utilise an alternative means to inflict abuse. Against this backdrop, it may be argued that this thesis has done little more than to interrogate the root causes of DVA confirming its pervasive, insidious nature and restating the enormous task ahead in confronting this phenomenon (World Health Organization, 2010).

11.4.2 Key point two

The second key point to be drawn from this study flows from the first. This study has reinforced how perpetrators of abuse will harness and exploit cultural resources open to them to inflict and perpetuate DVA. The challenge in tackling DVA lays in identifying and responding to those opportunities for abuse. It needs to be based on 'rich data sources that allow us to further our understanding of determinants of IPV against women. An increased understanding of IPV helps to design policies that aim to prevent violence and better support those who are at particular risk' (Reichel, 2017, p. 2). This thesis reinforces how fundamental it is that understandings of DVA are malleable and thus amenable to change. DVA should not be framed by an episodic account, instead, it must be viewed as a chronic course of destructive and controlling behaviours, which may or may not, include physical abuse. Those who use DVA will

opportunistically use vessels at their disposal and policy makers and practitioners must be well placed to adapt and respond to such changing manifestations.

11.5 What I have learnt about myself

As this thesis draws to a close, I add a personal note about what this PhD has taught me not about DVA, but about myself. I approached this project under the misconception that it required hard work and a methodical approach. I was right, but only in part. I neglected the power of thought. As the project unfolded I learnt that it is important to take 'time out' and make space to think: constructive time away from my project was just as important as time with it. I realised that I can be overly concerned with structure and discipline, traits which whilst important, can hinder the intellectual challenge this process demands. I have come to appreciate that I am not naturally reflective, and I need to cultivate thinking time to crystalize and develop my ideas.

At the beginning of my PhD journey, I thought that the vast amount of reading this thesis demanded would be arduous. I did not expect to enjoy processing information and analysing text. I was not prepared for how much this task would change me and my perception of the world around me; concepts which were new to me grasped and held my attention. This process has been stimulating and empowering, but at the same time it has been intense and all consuming. It has broadened my conceptual and theoretical horizons, not only in relation research and learning, but more widely it has changed the way I think. I have learnt how important it is to be critical and less accepting of the world around me.

11.6 Closing comments

According to DeVault (DeVault, 1990) it is incumbent on the feminist researcher to confront and challenge accepted ways of knowing, as she reminds us:

‘...traditional paradigms have been shaped by the concern and relevances of a relatively small group of powerful men. The dilemma for the feminist scholar, always, is to find ways of working within some disciplinary tradition while aiming at an intellectual revolution that will always transform that tradition’ (DeVault, 1990, p. 59).

Motivated by such a feminist duty, this study has brought together the two epistemically distinct traditions of FSE and Lacanian theory as a means of illuminating women's experiences of DVA. Tensions will always exist, as these standpoints insist upon disparate ways of knowing. My undertaking has not been to inaugurate a synthesis between these lenses as none would have been possible, rather it has been my intention to usurp and adopt elements of Lacanian parlance. This venture into Lacanian theory has not, however, caused me to neglect my feminist obligations; whilst Lacan has been the cornerstone of my endeavour the women's experiences of DVA have remained at the core of this thesis. Lacanian theory and FSE have worked together to prioritise the accounts the women provided. I have put aside the 'essentially academic argument about the *politics of psychoanalysis*' (Seshadri-Crooks, 2002, p. 3) preferring to find allegiance with those contemporary scholars who have been 'keen to present Lacan's ideas in an accessible and interesting way' (Hayes, 2013b, p. 1023). Lacanian theory has been employed to project and explore the women's formulation of self. The benefits of such an application have been definite, the model of the RSI has worked to disclose how the perpetrators of abuse moulded and ultimately exploited the women's notion of self. This thesis has revealed and promoted an understanding of DVA whereby the focus is removed from the women to the abuse they endured. In this way their construction of self may be regarded as a predictable, natural and obvious response to the abuse they have sustained. In this way this study has recommended avenues for further research. It has dislodged and challenged previous ways of knowing by providing unique insights which have promoted a richer understanding of the complex, multifaceted phenomena of DVA.

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University of
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Violence towards women and its connection with major sports events

A Female researcher from Chester University is
conducting research about the connection between
violence towards women and sport.

**She would like to speak to women like
you, and hear what you have to say.**

All information is treated in the strictest confidence.

- Thinking of taking part?
- Want to know more?

Please see the Participant Information Sheet
which is available here

Violence towards women and sport

The World Cup what
did it mean to you?

**All information is
confidential**

**Please see the
Participant
Information Sheet
for more details**

Jodie Swallow
PhD student
Faculty of Education and
Children's Services Email:
1224431@chester.ac.uk
Telephone:
07955 596870

Appendix Two: Ethical Approval



Faculty of Education & Children's Services

Dear Jodie

Thank you for your recent application to the Faculty Research Ethics Committee for approval, for your project entitled

A qualitative study of women's experiences of domestic violence surrounding major sporting events

In reviewing applications, the Committee refers to the criteria set out in the University of Chester Research Governance Handbook.

I am pleased to inform you that your application was reviewed by the committee (on Wednesday 12th February 2014) and has been granted approval to move on to the next stage.

Whilst approval has been granted on the basis of your information provided, please note that if there are any changes to your study you will need to submit an updated proposal for further consideration.

It is recommended that you maintain regular contact with your supervisor in order to ensure that your study continues to meet with ethical standards.

Please also note that attached to this letter is an "End of Project Report Form". You will need to submit this to the ethics committee once you have completed your project.

We wish you every success with your research,

Kind regards,

Dr Jane McKay
Chair of Faculty Research Ethics Committee
Faculty of Education & Children's Services
University of Chester
Parkgate Road
Chester
CH1 4BJ

Please direct all correspondence relating to ethics applications to: educationethics@chester.ac.uk

ECS Research Ethics Committee - End of research project update

As part of the overall ethical scrutiny and maintenance of research integrity, you are required to provide a project update at the end of your declared research period (as specified on your original ethics application). *Please provide a concise and accurate response to the following questions.*

Name of Researcher:.....

Project Title:

Date ethics approval given:.....

1. Did your project progress according to your plan of activity? YES/NO
(If no, please explain)

2. Did you complete your project on time and to stated aims and objectives? YES/NO
(If no, please explain)

3. Did you receive any complaints or concerns from your research participants, sponsors or anyone else associated with the project? YES/NO (If yes, please give details how these were dealt with)

4. Were any of the above mentioned issues notified to the ethics committee during the project? YES/NO
(If no, please explain)



**Faculty of Education & Children's
Services**

5. Did your project result in any outputs? (For example research articles, published reports, conference presentations etc). YES/NO
(If yes, please provide details)

6. Are you considering carrying out any follow-up research activity that is linked to this project? YES/NO
(If yes, please provide a brief summary)

PLEASE RETURN YOUR COMPLETED FORM TO educationethics@chester.ac.uk WHEN YOUR PROJECT IS COMPLETED.

Appendix Three: Abstract of Transcribed Data (Mary)

Were there other things that caused abuse?

[Pause] I have thought about it, because like I said earlier something would be right one day, but completely wrong the day after. Erm, and at first, he didn't let it out in front of other people. After a while he, he didn't even care that other people were seeing it, so erm...

[Silence]

Are you able to expand on that?

Erm [pause] the worst, the sort of I'm, I'm trying not to think about it too much and dwell, erm, but there was a lot of in the end, a lot of sleep deprivation. He would wake me in the middle of the night screaming at me, let me have a couple of hours and wake me up again, erm, so a lot of that at the end. He was just, he was just so angry, and he just wanted to shout all the time. But it's very much, erm he constantly said I am abusive, I am controlling, I am financially abusive 'cos I won't give him money for cannabis and I mean he had isolated me completely from my family. The majority of text when I ended it were he's the only person that's ever loved me, erm, no one else. No, no one else has ever loved me at all, he can see why I hate myself completely and why I have mental issues, as I am so evil, so...

You believed that?

Oh absolutely! 100%, I am a horrible, horrible, person. I am working through it now. But yeah, have sort of lived going... (starts crying).

[Silence]

Okay? [pause] You alright?

Yes, I'm fine, but I have lived it, I've thought it was all my fault, which is why I stayed for so long, and erm, and absolutely believed that, absolutely believed it.

[Silence]

Oh absolutely, Yeah, Yeah, and it's just...I am mean it was an awful experience. When he got physical with me, cos my little boy was there as well. He's ten, he was nine at the time. He dragged him off me, and that is how we got out of the house: this was between the five to eight and quarter to nine time bracket. Erm, oh yeah, and it was only when I got hit, it was only that he'd got physical. I have for a long time, I have gone "this isn't right" you know? When my logical voice has crept through, because I have been so...literally been exhausted for eight years.

Appendix Four: Participant Information Sheet



University of
Chester

Participant Information Sheet

Short title of study

Women's experiences of domestic violence at the time of major sporting events

You are being invited to take part in a research study:

- Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand the purpose of the research and what it will involve.
- Please take time to read the following information carefully and feel free to discuss it with others; if you do choose to discuss this research please be very careful not to put your own safety or anyone else's safety at risk.
- Please do not hesitate to ask me any questions you may have.
- It is important that you take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

What is the purpose of the study?

My name is Jodie Swallow and I am a female research student at Chester University.

I am interested in domestic violence and its connection with sport. The aim of my study is to speak to women about their experiences of domestic violence around the time of sporting events. This information will lead to a better understanding of domestic violence.

With your permission, I would like to talk to you about your experiences.

Why have I been chosen?

All women who access services at participating organisations have been made aware of this research.

If you are a woman over the age of 18, who speaks English and has experienced domestic violence around the time of a sports event I would like to invite you to take part in this research and tell me about your experiences.

Do I have to take part?

It is entirely up to you whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part you are free to change your mind at any time and you will not be asked why you have changed your mind.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you decide to take part, you will be invited to meet me for an interview, although it is called an interview it is not at all formal and will be more like a discussion. The interview will be at a time to suit you and at a refuge. It will be up to you how long the interview will last.



I will conduct the interview, and as I only speak English the interview will be in English. If you agree it will be audio taped; the only reason I want to tape the interview is to make sure that I have an accurate record of what you say.

During the interview, I will ask you about your experiences of domestic violence around the time of major sporting events. You can let me know if you have any questions. You do not have to answer all my questions if you don't want to, and you can ask me any questions you may have at any time. You can stop the interview at any time for any reason.

All the information you provide will be in the strictest confidence. A false name (chosen by you) will be used throughout the research process, I will change any other names you may mention in the interview. You will not be identifiable at any stage. I give more details about this below.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There are no disadvantages in taking part in the study, although you will be asked to meet with me and be interviewed on one occasion.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

The research which has already been done in this area has not listened to what women have to say. You will be able to provide valuable information about your experiences. By taking part you will be contributing to a study which will give a greater understanding of domestic violence and its connection with sport.

What if something goes wrong?

If you wish to complain or have any concerns about any aspect of the way you have been approached or treated during the course of this study, please contact: The Executive Dean of Education and Children's Services, Chester University, Riverside Campus, Castle Drive, Chester, CH1 1SL

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

Yes, at no stage whatsoever will your name or any identifiable details be used. Throughout this process you will remain anonymous, and I will change any other names you use.

You should be reassured that all the information you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence.

However, you need to be aware of the very limited circumstances when I might tell someone else what you said. I might tell someone else if, during the interview you tell me something which makes me think that a child is at risk or you tell me something which leads me to believe that you are a real risk to yourself or another person.

Once the interview is completed I will comply with strict rules about how the information should be stored; all the research materials, for example the audio tapes and any handwritten notes will be kept in a locked safe with limited access. All the electronic information will be password protected.

All the materials will be destroyed by myself once I have analysed their contents. At no time will anyone else have access to these materials for any purpose.

What will happen to the results of the research study?



University of
Chester

The information provided by everyone who takes part will be collected, analysed and form the basis of my PhD thesis, it is open to you in the future, to see my completed thesis. In my work, I may use quotes from our interview, but these will be anonymous and there is no risk that you could be identified. The findings may be published for example in an academic journal or I may talk about my research at conferences.

This does not effect your confidentiality, your name and any identifiable details will not be available to any one for any purpose at any time.

The findings will be used to improve our understandings of women's experiences of domestic violence.

Who is organising and funding the research?

It is important for you to understand that I am completely independent. It does not matter whether or not you take part in this research, whatever you decide the care and support you receive from the participating organisation will not be effected.

There is no specific funding/backing supporting this research.

Who may I contact for further information?

If you would like more information about the research before you decide whether or not to take part, please contact me in confidence:

Jodie Swallow
Faculty of Education and Children's Services
University of Chester Riverside Campus,
Castle Drive
Chester CH1 1SL

Telephone: 07955 596870
Email: 1224431@chester.ac.uk

I would like to hear from you, if you contact me your query will be handled sensitively and in confidence

Thank you for reading this and for your interest in this research.

Appendix Five: Letter from Ethics Committee

From: education ethics
Sent: 24 March 2015 14:13
To: JODIE SWALLOW
Cc:
Subject: RE: Advice please

Hello Jodie,

Thanks for your email. This is an interesting issue and I appreciate you getting in touch. Normally I would suggest that further ethical scrutiny is required but I think in this instance, because the women themselves have suggested an alternative and you are able to gain their informed consent using the usual protocols, a group interview would be an acceptable alternative.

This provides you with an opportunity to consider the importance of co-construction and the role of the participant in research, and the essential nature of on-going negotiated access and engagement.

In summary, I see no problem with you utilising this alternative method of data collection as it is specifically responding to the needs of the participants.

I will fine your email accordingly so that the Ethics Committee has the alteration noted, but you will not need to submit any further information.

BW

Dr Jane McKay
Chair of the Faculty Research Ethics Committee
Senior Lecturer in Education Studies
Faculty of Education & Children's Services
University of Chester
Parkgate Road
Chester
CH1 4BJ

Appendix Six: Written Consent Form



Informed Consent Form

Project Title: A qualitative study of women's experiences of Domestic Violence surrounding major sporting events

This consent form is to make sure that you understand the study, that you are aware of your rights and that you are happy to take part in the study. When you have read the Participant Information Sheet, please carefully read this form and then if you are happy to, fill in each part where you are asked to do so.

Please circle as appropriate

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Have you been given information about the research? | YES | NO |
| 2. Do you understand what you are being asked to do? | YES | NO |
| 3. Have you been informed that you may approach the researcher at any time with any questions you might have? | YES | NO |
| 4. Do you understand that you can withdraw from the study at any time? | YES | NO |
| 5. Do you understand what the participant information sheet says about your information being treated as confidential? | YES | NO |

I understand that the research will be conducted in line with the University of Chester Research Governance Research Handbook and Data Protection Act (1998 and 2003).

I agree that I am happy to take part in the study and that I understand all the above.

I agree that quotations from any discussions may be used in the PhD and also as described in the information sheet. I understand that this will be done anonymously.

I acknowledge that I may see any reports written during the research this will be made available to me, if required.

SIGNED..... DATE.....

PRINT NAME.....

The false name I have chosen for this research is.....

RESEARCHER SIGNED..... DATE.....

Thank you for taking part

Jodie Swallow, Faculty of Education and Children's Services, University of Chester, Riverside Campus, Castle Drive, Chester, CH1 1SL

Telephone: 07955 596870 Email: 1224431@chester.ac.uk